

GROUND- HOPPER Magazine



ISSUE NO.
25

OCTOBER
1989

£1



THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE INDEPENDENT NON-LEAGUE TRAVELLER!

INSIDE THIS MONTH'S 44-PAGE ISSUE

- FOUR-PAGE PULL-OUT ON MELTON TOWN ●SPECIAL
- FEATURE ON ASHFORD TOWN'S NEW GROUND ●LEO'S LINES
- WARRINGTON TOWN FEATURE ●BEAZER VIZA ●NEWS
- CLUB FOCUS : EASTBOURNE TOWN ●TARTAN TRAVELS
- BIRMINGHAM BONUS ●HOPPER POST ●BRIGGSY CALLIN'
- DOZENS OF PHOTOS ●WELSH RABBIT ●PLUS LOTS MORE!

GROUND- HOPPER Magazine

439 Merton Road, Wandsworth
London SW18 5LB

*Please note: We **do not** accept telephone enquiries relating to the magazine under any circumstances. All communication **must** be in writing to above address.*

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Steve Pettit, Colin Peel, Leo Hoenig

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THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE INDEPENDENT NON-LEAGUE TRAVELLER

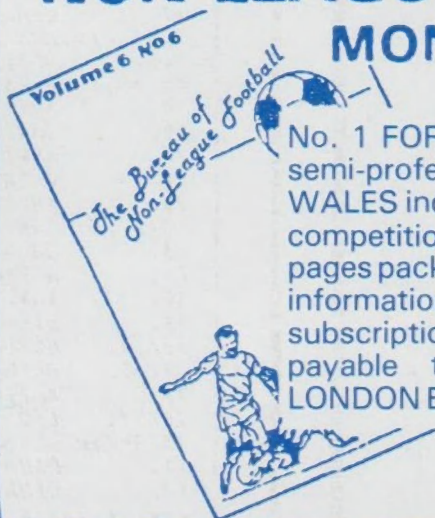
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To

The EDITORS View

The new football season is now well and truly under way with the opening fixtures in most leagues having been played.

But no sooner are we getting into the bread and butter league games then along comes the FA Cup to add even more glamour and excitement to the proceedings, and Saturday 2nd September will be the day that groundhoppers up and down the country will be travelling to the remotest parts of the land in search of competitive, entertaining FA Cup action. Whether you are planning trips to Alnwick Town or Yeading, you will all be hoping that the extra competitive spirit that makes the FA Cup so special will be evident, even if it is only the Preliminary Round. The 136 ties were published in last month's issue of *GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE*, along with the full draws for the FA Trophy and FA Vase ties as well, and quite often, these early rounds bring out the highlights of the year for the groundhoppers as they travel long distances to grounds that they may not usually consider.

The FA Vase is a particular favourite as it often throws up some intriguing ties in fascinating locations, and many regard this the most interesting of the FA competitions. Another interesting aspect of these early season cup competitions is the chance of getting to grounds for midweek replays at venues that are still without floodlights as the early kick-offs make it easier for getting home afterwards (even allowing for the possibility of extra-time).

Some unusual programmes turn up at the small clubs playing in the FA Vase, and these are particularly sought after by groundhoppers who like to collect one programme per club. Many clubs who wouldn't normally issue for a league game, have to issue for Vase games, and these become collectors items and quite often change hands for many times higher than their cover price soon after the match is played. That is another reason why so many groundhoppers are out in force at the cup games, particularly the FA Vase ties.

So, from Saturday 2nd September onwards, it is virtually cup-tie football right through to Christmas with the exception of a couple of Saturdays. If you have interesting tales to tell about your adventures watching cup ties, drop us a line. If you can send in ground or action photos, all the better. See you next month.

● COVER PHOTO ●

This month's front cover photo features the stand at *BERRIEW F.C.* This was taken in May 1988. They play in the Spar Montgomery Amateur League.

PHOTO : STEVE MOORE

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

We're back with another sparkling issue next month. And here are just SOME of the items to be featured:-

- * 4-page pull-out on *PONTEFRAC T COLLIERIES* containing facts about the club, photos, how to get there, maps, programme details, where to eat and drink, places of interest nearby, etc. If you are planning a trip to Skinner Lane, read next month's issue.
- * Will the reds ever be back? An article in words and pictures on *WORKINGTON* by Paul M Clements. It's exclusive, and will be in the next issue.
- * "Beazer Visa" by Toby Jackson looks at his trips to Alvechurch, Bromsgrove Rovers and Dorchester, with a particular emphasis on gossip from the Boardrooms of these clubs.
- * Graham Mitchell tells us about his "Sussex Awayday" including photos of the grounds.
- * There is all the early season reviews of 1989-90 non-league programmes from Ron Jones including some very unusual issues.
- * All the regular features will be here and these include *WELSH RABBIT*, *BRIGGSY CALLIN*, *LEO'S LINES*, *TONY MIDDLETON*, etc, etc.
- * Plus lots more with news, dozens of photos, competition, Club Shop Review, etc.

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PLEASE NOTE : Due to shortage of space we are unable to bring you one or two items planned for this issue, including "Out and About" with Steve King, "Best of the West" etc. We apologise for this, but we hope to include these features in forthcoming issues of your favourite non-league magazine. But we still have a bumper 44-page issue this month, making ours the best value magazine around - still only £1.

NEWSDESK

COMPILED BY STEVE KING

A licence has been granted for a new clubhouse at *BOGNOR REGIS TOWN* and work will commence during the season....*ROCESTER* are the latest Banks's Premier League side to install floodlights. The club has invested £21,000 in the project and are hopeful of having a Football League side visit them in October to officially switch the lights on... Pitch and ground improvements have been made at *BANGOR CITY*, which include completely re-seeding the pitch at a cost of nearly £5,000....*BILSTON UNITED* have resigned from the Banks's Division One because the club are disenchanted with the attitude of the players. Only 10 turned up for training and none of those who attended were on the books of the club last season....*NEWTON ABBOT* have sprung a major shock by announcing their resignation from the Jewson South-Western League, just two weeks before the new season. The reason is that they say their team just isn't good enough, with some players leaving to join G.M. Western League teams and the club not being able to attract adequate replacements. Newton Abbot could well be fined the maximum £300 when the JSWL meet next on September 1st. Newton's withdrawal from the JSWL means only four Devon clubs remain, those being Clyst Rovers, Holsworthy, Tavistock and Appledore. Torquay United and Teignmouth withdrew last season. JSWL Secretary Roger Lowe commented, "It has come as a shock and disappointment that Newton Abbot have resigned. We've always looked upon Newton as one of our better-run clubs during their 12 seasons with us." Newton will now play in the South Devon League Division One....*CARSHALTON ATHLETIC* have moved their pitch 10ft to make room for terracing at the Colston Avenue end of the ground....And at *KINGSTONIAN*, the club have been granted an A grading for their brand new 800-seater Kingsmeadow stadium. The pitch is said to look like a bowling green... *GRESLEY ROVERS* manager Frank Northwood has blasted the Beazer Homes League top brass for giving his club another promotion snub. Gresley applied to join the BHL from the Banks's Brewery League recently when Coventry Sporting pulled out. They were told then that the BHL would be running with a club short in 1989-90, but then suddenly, Barry Town came from nowhere to snatch the vacant place. And Northwood said, "We've spent over £4,000 on bringing the ground up to scratch, including £1,000 on the dressing rooms!" "No disrespect to the Banks's Brewery League but we feel we deserve a better class of football."....*MALDEN VALE*'s Grand Drive headquarters have been a hive of activity in the summer as the club prepared for their first taste of Vauxhall League football. The erection of a new 100-seater stand and other

improvements have left the ground looking smart. And there are plans to extend the new stand to accommodate 250 spectators....*NORTHWICH VICTORIA*'s Drill Field ground has been confirmed as the oldest football ground in England, and, as the game started in this country, the world. Vics' Vice-President Ken Edwards, while researching the club's history, discovered in a local newspaper, dated 30th September 1876, a notice advertising Vics' opening game of that season at The Drill Field. The paper went on to report that the ground was being made available to Vics' again, suggesting that they had used the ground before 1876....*OLDHAM TOWN* of the Bass NWCL have demolished and rebuilt a new dressing room complex....BBC TV cameras spent a day filming part of an episode for a forthcoming programme in the popular drama series "Casualty" at the ground of GM Western League club *MANGOTSFIELD UNITED*. A handful of Mangotsfield players joined the regular cast of the programme - which is filmed entirely in and around the Bristol area - for the filming session at Cossham Street. A couple of humorous incidents occurred during filming. Firstly, one of the "real" actors was meant to score a goal, but the United 'keeper kept saving his shots so it took several attempts before the director was satisfied!! Also, the dressing rooms (given a complete redecoration job during the summer in club colours of maroon and white, was deemed far too neat and clean by the BBC who promptly set about 'dirtying' them up to give them a more 'lived-in' look. Secretary Frank Leworthy made certain that the BBC agreed to repair all damage before leaving the ground!! It is anticipated that the relevant episode will be screened sometime during the Autumn when the new series is programmed by BBC. The local Bristol Evening Post gave the club a $\frac{1}{2}$ page of publicity under the heading:- "MANGOTSFIELD ON THE BOX : United's finest step out of the football shadows for a day!"....*STAMBRIDGE* have received planning permission to erect floodlights at their ground, and are now raising money for the project....*COLNE DYNAMOES* are the latest club that could be moving grounds. The ambitious NPL club have acquired land that they hope to develop into a new all-seater stadium with a capacity of about 15,000....*BROMSGROVE ROVERS* have brought their ground up to GMVC standard by building new dressing rooms, boardroom and vice-presidents lounge under their stand.... Turnstiles have been built at the entrance to the ground at *PAGET RANGERS* who have also extended the covered accommodation....*EMLEY* have built a new 200-seater stand, new boardroom and changing rooms at their ground.

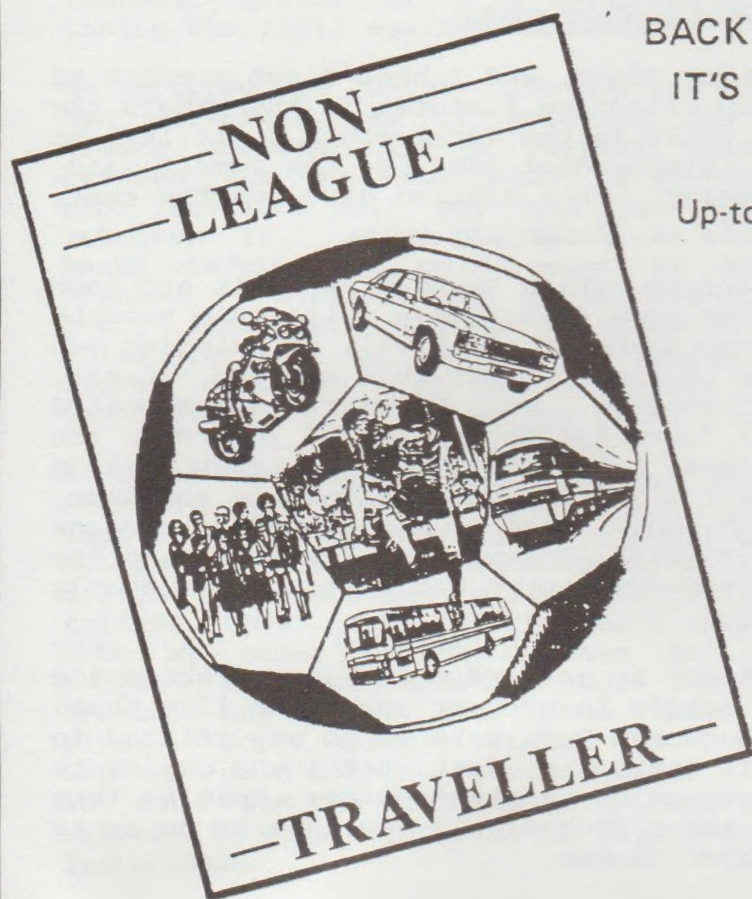
THIS MONTH'S COMPETITION

As we didn't receive a single entry to last month's competition, it either means we made it too difficult or you are getting bored with them. So, what we have decided to do is hold open last month's competition for a further month in order for you to work out the answers. The closing date is now 15th September. If we still haven't received any entries by then, it will be declared void and we will have a new one for you in the next issue - possibly a little easier next time!

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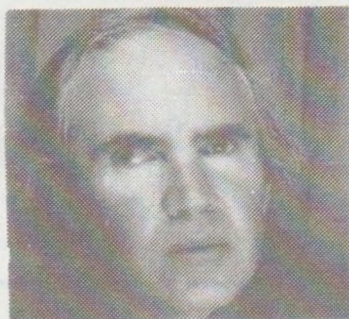
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35 issues) or £12.25 for half-season to Christmas 1989.*

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The TONY



MIDDLETON Column

THE MONTHLY COLUMN FOR ALL HOPPERS

0898 - WHAT'S THAT SPELL

It was late on a pre-season Friday night, and I hadn't got a match to go to on Saturday. I could find no fixtures in the papers the following morning, and phone calls to the local clubs still left me without a match. Not to worry, simply dial 0898, so the advert said, and all fixtures will be revealed. So I dialled 0898 and the rest, and eagerly awaited my fate.

I was greeted by a musical fanfare, which sounded as if it had been recorded from an old 78 twelve inch disk. Then followed a nervous sounding voice -- This is Tony Inchendo and I will be bringing you important news of simply dozens of fixtures for this weekend. Great, that is just what I wanted, I thought. Only it wasn't quite what I wanted. The musical and verbal intro had so far lasted just over one minute (at 38p per minute) and was continuing. Later in this broadcast, continued the voice, I will give you the details you want, but first -- and so it went on. Next, I had to endure someone telling me all about Bradford Park Avenue and Ilkeston, and how exciting the new season would be. By now, I had listened for nearly 4 minutes, and still no fixtures.

The Ilkeston voice was replaced by someone prattling on about the pre-war history of the Essex Senile League, or something like that. I was informed that the old Dagenham Town were in no way related to the new Dagenham F.C. Great, fantastic, just what I was paying to hear. Six minutes into the recording, another voice: This is Tony Inch etc., if you want the fixtures, all you have to do is to phone 0898, and he gave a different number.

Now, why, Mr. Broadcaster, do you advertise a service, and a phone number, for FIXTURES, when all we get is a load of vocal garbage about anything and everything, except the one thing we all are paying to hear. I only wanted the fixtures. Anyway, in for a penny, in for a fortune. With some trepidation I not so eagerly phoned the newly quoted number, and cringed when I once again heard -- This is Tony Inch ... Another minute and a half of spouting away, and at long last I get the fixtures I had fully expected to get eight minutes earlier.

That afternoon, I was at my chosen match, ironically Fisher Athletic, and was talking to other casual visitors. One of them laughed. You phoned 0898, did you, he said. How long did you have to wait for the interviews to finish. Do what I do, he continued, phone from work, it's cheaper.

I have a much better idea. Why don't we all ask the nice gentleman, when we next see him, if he would be as good as to give us the fixtures first, interviews second, and explain to him nicely that 0898 spells SERVICE, and not MONEY.

SUGAR

One Saturday in March I decided, for no apparent reason, that I would go over to Belgium. Why not, if Chris Ashbridge can do it, why can't I. I drove down to Dover and took the midnight boat out to Oostende. Lesley went as well. We landed at six in the morning, and the only place open was Oostende station, where breakfast awaited us for just 200 BF. I must admit that at that time in the morning I was ready for breakfast. I do not like sugar in my tea, but always take the sachets and put them in my pocket, or in my bag. Lesley does not take sugar either, so we invariably end up with a houseload of unwanted sugar, fermenting in the kitchen. As we had already had tea at Farthing Corner, Dover Terminus, and on Sealink's Herald of Free Enterprise, by the time we left Oostende I must have collected about fifty packets. It was still early, in fact it was the ideal time for a drive along the coast. Quite by chance we passed alongside Adinkerke football ground at 9 in the morning, just as the local side were taking the field against Oostende in a youth match.

We stopped to watch. Another new ground. This particular venue was different, as it bordered the Belgium customs post. The French customs were a further three miles up the road, and in between was No Mans Land. If the ball was kicked too hard, some poor Belgian ball boy had to rush off into No Mans Land to retrieve it. After the match, we still had plenty of time on our hands before the main event at Waregem, so we drove on into France. Unfortunately I had forgotten about the Belgium customs post, and went through at about 40 mph without stopping. Three miles further on, we were flagged down by an officious looking French douanier. He was not happy. We were the first vehicle he had had for hours, and he was going to make the most of it.

A quick search of the interior of the car, and we were cordially invited into the customs room, for a formal search. Cordially wasn't quite the word, but it sufficed. I was asked to turn out my pockets, and out came about ten packets of sugar. With great delight our customs officer held the packets up to the light, sniffed them, and put them back onto the table. I returned them into my other pocket. Then he asked me to turn out my other pocket, and out came the sugar I had just put back. I can speak French, but there are times when crass stupidity is the best plan. So I simply looked on. The other customs officer was saying 'ce n'est que le sucre blanc.' But my one was unconvinced, so out came the contents of my bag, and Lesley was definitely not amused. More sugar came to light, and Sucre blanc quickly became Sacre bleu.

Twenty minutes later we were allowed to go, but by this time we had had more than enough of France, so we drove on for a mile, turned and came back again. Our customs officer appeared on the other side of the road, but this time waved us through with a shrug of his blue coated shoulders. We carried on to Waregem, where seats were 700 BF (£12) each. So we stood for 100 BF. By this time it was raining heavily, and a huge rainbow encircled the aptly named Regenbouw Stadion. The football wasn't too bad, and the programme was excellent, but, when we arrived back at Zeebrugge and I opened my bag, my hard earned packets of sugar had turned into a nasty sticky mass where the rain had got inside. I have not yet been back to France, and who can blame me.

Tony Middleton

Tony Middleton.

ASHFORD TOWN

THE HOMELANDS

From grassfields to the *Dream Come True*

ASHFORD TOWN successfully moved into their new ground at The Homelands recently, and this was reflected by the impressive 2,341 for the very first game there against a young Charlton Athletic side, with Town 2-0 winners. A special souvenir programme was produced at £1 to mark the occasion. Then came an even better attendance against West Ham, with 3,451 seeing Hammers win a closely fought game 3-2 with Ince scoring twice.

The ground, which is set in rural surroundings, is 4 miles from the centre of Ashford in the village of Kingsnorth. You will see elsewhere that The East Kent Road Company are offering football supporters a special bus service on matchdays which passes the railway station, with fares at £1.15 return. If driving, the stadium is approx. 1 mile from Kingsnorth Village, on the A2070, on the left hand side, just after you have passed the second crossroads from the village. The Homelands was purchased for a sum of £80,000, and it consists of 70½ acres, eight of which are woodland. The site was recognised by Chairman Doug Gillard as a strong possibility of being the new home of Ashford Town FC. It was the 20th site the club has looked at over a period of fifteen years. Negotiation began for the purchase of Homelands, but broke down when the owner withdrew the land from the market. After a while, the land was again put up for sale and the club was quick to begin proceedings to purchase it.

The first planning application was passed by Ashford Borough Council but was then refused by the County Council, resulting in the club having to groundshare at Folkestone FC for two years instead of one.

Work began in September 1988 with the club's Vice-Chairman Phil Castle in charge of construction. To look around the ground and see what has been achieved by Phil and his colleagues in such a short time is truly tremendous.

There is still a lot of work to be done on the stadium to improve it still further, and the club are hoping this is done as soon as

possible.

The club now believe they have facilities which are among the best in non-league football.

Accommodation includes a large Social club, Executive Lounge, and three boxes on the First floor. Light refreshments are available from the Clubroom and Tea-Bar. The floodlights have an average lux value of 233.

The Supporters Club are planning to raise funds for the side opposite the grandstand to be transformed into standing covered accommodation. There is already excellent car parking facilities with enough room for 250 cars.

Groundhoppers who may be wishing to visit The Homelands in the weeks to come will be interested in Ashford Town's forthcoming home fixtures which are as follows:-
Sat. 2nd Sept v. Alvechurch, Tues. 5th Sept v. Gosport Borough, Tues. 12th Sept v. Chelmsford City, Sat. 7th Oct v. V.S. Rugby, Tues. 24th Oct v. Wealdstone, Tues. 31st Oct Hastings Town (WIC), Sat. 4th Nov v. Bath City and Sat. 18th Nov v. Moor Green.
Admission this season for 1st team games is £2.00 for adults, OAP's and under 14's £1.00 and transfer to stand costing an extra 50p.

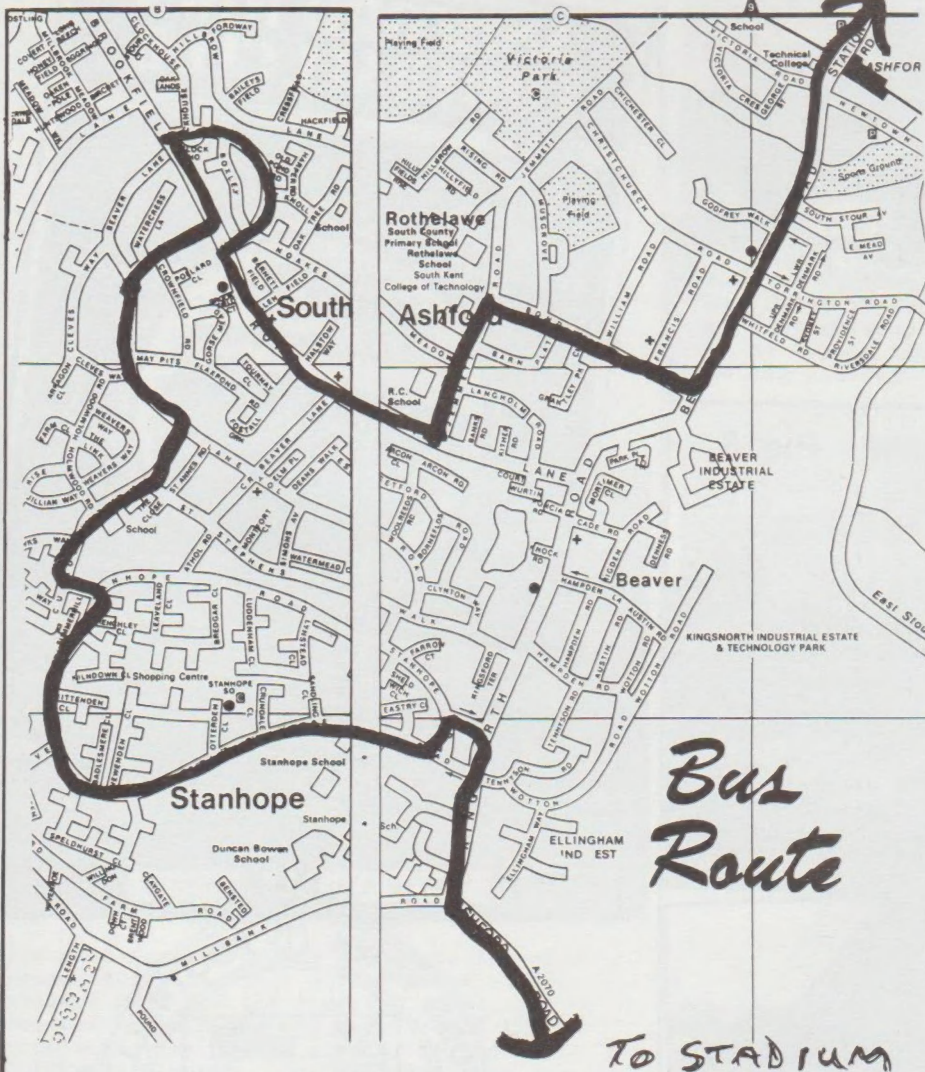
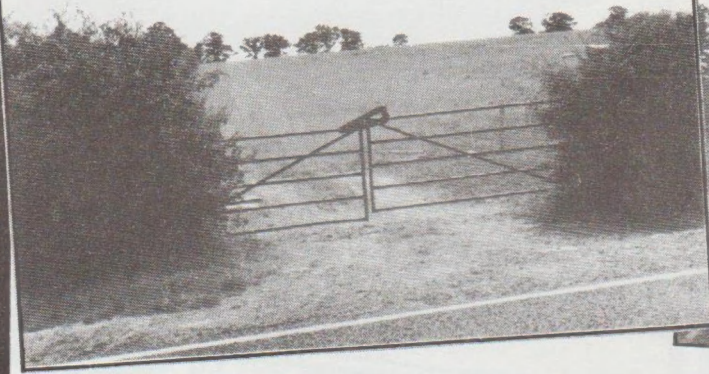
So everything is looking good for the club and as Secretary Alan Lancaster points out, "The club now has the facilities to proceed along the pyramid of football in step with the growing prosperity that is forecast for Ashford the "Growth Town of Kent" as the Channel Tunnel becomes reality."

WRITTEN BY
STEVE KING



15th Aug. 1988 Pic. 1

29th Aug. 1988 Pic. 2



*Bus
Route*

To Stadium

The map shows the route from East Kent Bus Depot to the HOMELANDS Football Stadium, Kingsnorth. All Bus stops on line of route are OBSERVED ON REQUEST.*

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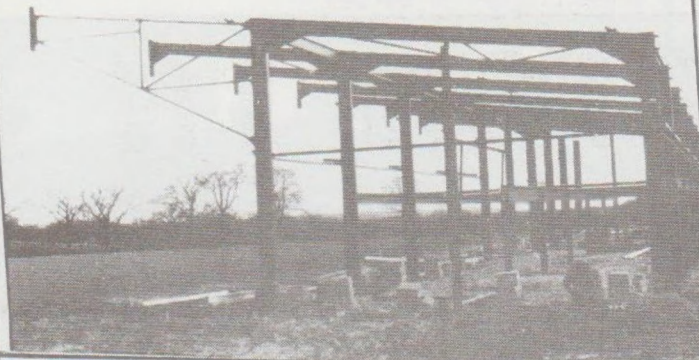
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12th Dec. 1988 Pic. 3

22nd Dec. 1988 Pic. 4



9th Feb. 1989 Pic. 5



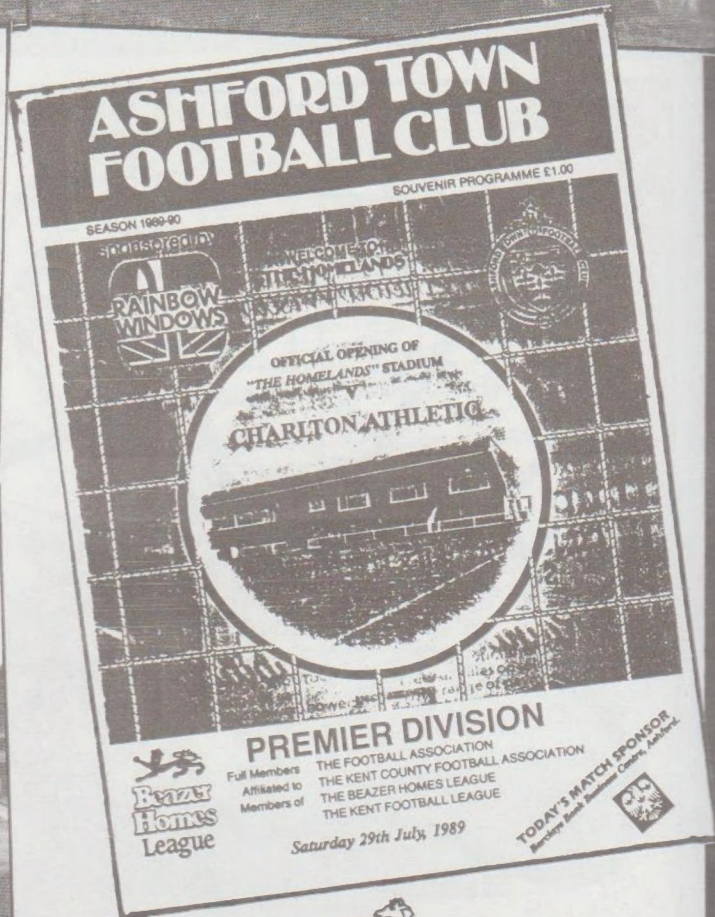
6th March 1989 Pic. 6



20th March 1989 Pic. 7



26th April 1989 Pic. 8



7th June 1989 Pic. 9



The photo's show the development of the Homelands from grassfields to the 'Dream Come True'.

Photo's courtesy of Alan Wilson

WARRINGTON TN.

Formed in 1949 as Stockton Heath Albion, Warrington Town moved to their present ground in the Latchford area of Warrington in 1956. Situated in Common Lane, at the junction of Loushers Lane and Wash Lane, the ground is approximately 2 miles from the town centre. It is served by several buses which can be picked up from the bus station which is only a few minutes walk from either Warrington train stations, Bank Quay or Central.

If travelling by car, take the A49 from the town centre towards Stockton Heath. Turn left into Loushers Lane at the traffic lights at the Greenall Whitley Brewery. The ground is at the far end of the Lane on the right.

If you require a meal before the game, Warrington town centre has several fine pubs serving food and also has all the usual fast food outlets and several restaurants and cafes. There is only a fish and chip shop near the ground.

The ground is a neat compact stadium, with a capacity of 3,000 of which about 1,000 is under cover, with 200 seated.



The entrance at Warrington Town

The club finished a creditable sixth in the Bass North West Counties League Division One last season, and will no doubt be going out to try to improve on that position when the big kick-off gets under way.



The Clubhouse side.

The club reached the final of the FA Vase at Wembley in 1986-87 season and were runners-up the year before so the town knows all about the big-match atmosphere, and although primarily this is rugby league land, the football team have shown that they also have much to offer the local community with



Warrington Town's ground.

The main feature of the ground is the clubhouse, built in 1962, which houses a bar, concert room and the dressing rooms. Several photographs and momentos of the club's history are on display in the James Drinkwater Lounge. Refreshments are usually available at half-time in the concert room.

Adjacent to the clubhouse is the 200-seater stand which was built in 1982. Opposite the clubhouse is a covered standing area. Both ends are uncovered, temporary terracing has been erected at the Loushers Lane end.

The club are to implement a programme of ground improvements as they seek to move up the pyramid. The main objective is to install floodlights.

Last season, Town issued a 30p programme consisting of 28 pages, relying on the NWCL newsletter for most of the reading matter along with several pages of facts and figures and results of local clubs in various leagues.

Admission prices last season were £1 for adults and 50p for children and OAP's.



some superb cup results over the years to get the interest going in the town.

GENERAL INFORMATION

GROUND: Common Lane, Warrington.

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 0925 31932

FLOODLIGHTS: No

PROGRAMME: Yes, 30p for 24 pages (88-89).

COLOURS: Yellow and Blue

LEAGUE: Bass North West Counties Div. One

CAPACITY: 3,000

COVERED ACCOMMODATION: 1,000

SEATS: 200

CLUBHOUSE: Yes

CLUB SHOP: No

TEA BAR: Yes

MIDWEEK GAMES: Tuesday

PROGRAMME RON JONES

★ SCENE ★



WEDNESDAY AUG. 2nd 1989 6.30PM K.O.

NETTLEHAM F.C.

v.
BURY
TOWN

FRIENDLY MATCH
MILBANE PARK, NETTLEHAM

PROGRAMME No.
Incorporating Results

50p

CLUB
FOOTBALL
1066

HASTINGS
TOWN F.C.

vs
DOVER
ATHLETIC

MEMBERS
Beazer Homes League
Southern Division
Winston Road Kent League
Gilbert Rice Floodlight Cup

1989/90 Seasons
Official Programme

40p

CORINTHIAN-
CASUALS
FOOTBALL CLUB

JUBILEE
SEASON
1938/40
1989/90

Arundel F.C.

ARUNDEL TOWN F.C. CENTENARY
1889-1989

Centenary Cup
Tournament

28-30 July 1989

Saxon travel

It's good to be back again, at last being able to watch some "proper" football after a recent diet of half-hearted, effortless soccer that was billed as "pre-season friendlies". Yes, the serious stuff is with us again and I for one say thank heavens for that! Mind you, not all the friendlies I saw were dull, uninteresting affairs. It's just that when you know something is at stake, such as vital league points or progression to the next round of a cup competition, players are going to give 100% effort, because if they don't, they would not last that long at the club.

Anyway, I'm just back from a recent excursion from watching English football by watching several games north of the border. Amongst the grounds visited were those at Berwick Rangers, Hibernian and Brechin City. And I can honestly tell all groundhoppers who have yet to make a visit to Brechin's ground that you wouldn't be disappointed if you went there because it is well worth a visit. Very picturesque, make sure you get there before the bulldozers do because you can never tell these days can you?

I'm now off to the West Country where I will be taking in games at Saltash, and several others which may include Chard and Paulton Rovers perhaps. I know what you are all thinking - this magazine must be paying me handsomely to be able to go swanning off to Scotland and the West Country. But to be honest, Steve tried talking me out of it by persuading me to go to far more interesting and picturesque places such as Yeading, Hounslow and Tooting and Mitcham but I wouldn't have any of it! I told him it was in the cause of

research for this wonderful column and he fell for it, so now I may start to plan further trips to Cornwall, the Scottish Highlands, Wales or even Fisher Athletic in pursuit of little gems for these pages - all expenses paid, of course! Enough of these trivialities, let's get on with the job in hand - reviewing some of the programmes seen so far this season.

First off the matchday magazine conveyor belt is a pricey, but reasonable issue from FA Vase winners TAMWORTH, who produce a 20-pager with a glossy-ish cover on white paper, printed in club colours of red, with a black & white photo of their greatest moments after winning the FA Vase Replay at Peterborough. For their opening game of 1989-90 against local rivals Redditch, the programme consisted of a few notes from manager Graham Smith, a page on the visitors, non-league news page, a page for filling in results from the division this season in the form of a chart, plus last season's final league table, the centre pages had an action photo plus last season's appearances and scorers, then comes noticeboard and a page of club news, with a page devoted to the history of Tamworth following, which will be in instalments, then comes half a page giving Tamworth's next away game details including a map on how to get there, and the 1989-90 fixtures follow, with team line-ups on the back page. Not particularly good value for money at 50p, but with a large following and Wembley success behind them, I suppose it makes good economic sense to cash in. HARINGEY BOROUGH issue a strange programme this season. Now that they are back in the land of living and playing in the Greene King Spartan League, they have decided to issue a black & white 8 page glossy issue for 30p. The front cover has a team line-up plus match details for the day, but it is strange because there are no notes whatsoever on the match in hand. Page 2 has a league table plus a few notes on visitors SOUTHGATE ATHLETIC, and the only other written content is a page about the Youth Team! The back page has the team line-ups. It is a great shame because while it is appreciated that they did at least bother to issue, why not put some imagination into it and add a little content as well, especially as it is fully typeset throughout on glossy paper and it has the individual match details on the cover? This is quite dreadful value for 30p, although some will argue that it is better than no programme at all and that we should be thankful. I accept that, but it would be nice to give value as well. HASTINGS TOWN's programme hasn't altered much this season, with a slight variation in the cover design being the only noticeable change. For their Mark Baldwin Memorial Trophy match with Dover Athletic, they issued a 40p 24-page issue with glossy cover in red and black on white paper. Content includes nothing original and has Secretary's notes, pen-pictures of the



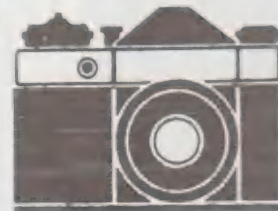
opposition, Supporters Club news, club history, etc with team line-ups in the centre pages. Now that CORINTHIAN CASUALS are settled in at their new home at Tolworth, they are issuing for every game in the Spartan League, and this season are doing a 12-pager for 20p. The cover is printed on sky blue paper and shows an illustration of the amalgamation of the Corinthian Club and Casuals in 1939 and the two old club badges that were worn with pride on the players shirts of these two great clubs. It is their Jubilee

Continued on page 19



Notts County 'keeper Steve Cherry collects a corner during his side's 5-0 win at Warminster in July in a pre-season friendly.
Photo: TIM LANCASTER

NON- LEAGUE



ACTION

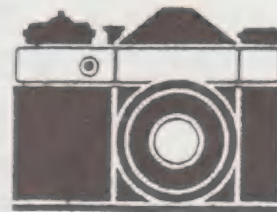
Goalmouth action during the exciting Dan-Air League match at Farleigh Rovers who beat Merstham 3-2 at Parsonage Field 24.12.88. Photo: D WEST





Lesmagow 1, Ormiston Primrose 1
(4-2 on pens to Ormiston) in the
Scottish Junior Cup semi-final at
Linlithgow Rose. Photo: LEO HOENIG

NON- LEAGUE



ACTION



Great Mills League action from Rad-
stock v. Saltash played on Sunday
16.4.89. This match ended in a 1-1
draw. Photo: STEVE KING

David Collins

WELSH RABBIT...

*All the latest news and gossip from the Welsh
non-league scene*

This month I am concentrating on the MANWEB Central Wales League and in particular on two of the newcomers to the league last season.

CARNO returned to the league for 1988/89 as champions of the Montgomeryshire Amateur League. They had a difficult season on the field, finishing third from bottom with only 5 wins, but this is an ambitious little club and I'm sure they don't regret making the step up. In fact they must be looking forward to a more successful season, having captured Peter Canning who managed Newtown Reserves into second place in the MANWEB league last season. Canning is bringing seven of that side with him.

Carno is a small, rather strung out, village on the main A470 road 6 miles west of Caersws, amid wild moorlands. The football ground is called Maes Sarn (field by the road) and is indeed right alongside the main road, on the left coming from Caersws, about half a mile beyond the Aleppo Merchant Inn. A new stand has been constructed on the halfway line during the course of last season.



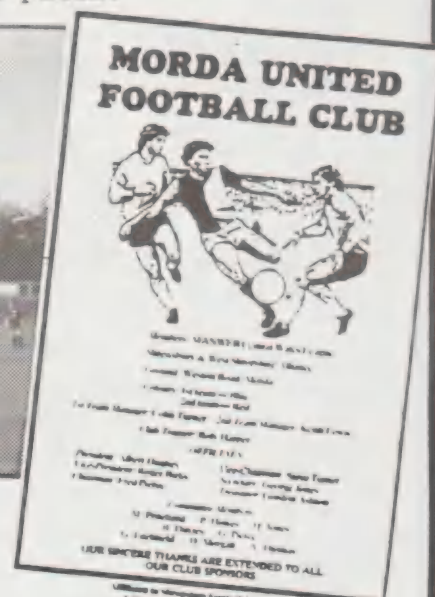
ABOVE : Carno's Maes Sarn Ground. Photo : DAVID COLLINS

MORDA UNITED were one of the other newcomers, elected to the MANWEB league as Shropshire league champions. Morda is a village a mile south of Oswestry and so this is an English club in a Welsh league. Unlike Carno, Morda had an excellent season, finishing a good fourth behind Caersws, Newtown reserves and Knighton. This is all the more impressive when you consider that Morda spent the early part of the season based at a pitch on the other side of Oswestry while their ground and pitch improvements took place, and later they struggled to stage matches at their Weston Road ground during the wet Spring weather.

I visited Weston Road for Morda's final game of the season. There was a good crowd of about 100, swelled by several fellow groundhoppers and no doubt also helped by the fine weather - it might have been different on a wet December afternoon. Weston road is a pleasant little ground alongside the village social club. This season a new changing room block has been built, with an overhang which seems to count as spectator cover for league purposes. The buildings at the social club end are above pitch level, so it is possible to get a good view of the pitch.



ABOVE : Action from the Morda Utd v. Penrhyncoch match.
Photo : DAVID COLLINS



Morda issue a programme for first team matches, quite a professional issue with a pale yellow cover, 12 pages of adverts and a four page insert.

So much for last season. This term the MANWEB league gains two clubs, TALGARTH and ABERYSTWYTH Reserves, and loses PRESTEIGNE. Talgarth aren't really newcomers, having left the league in 1981, vowing to return. Their acceptance was based on a good playing record, though they actually finished fourth in the Mid Wales South league in 1988/89 after taking the championship a year earlier. Off the field they seem well prepared, and told the league AGM that they plan to extend their covered accommodation in line with MANWEB league requirements.

KINGTON TOWN did not apply after all (their players didn't fancy the extra travelling) but PENPARCAU applied and were rejected because their Neuadd Goffa ground lacks cover at present - though they have applied for planning permission for a stand.

That's all for this month. I'll be looking north next month and featuring Welsh Alliance newcomers Locomotive Llanberis.

David Collins

REMEMBER : IF SENDING IN PHOTOGRAPHS FOR PUBLICATION, PLEASE INDICATE CLEARLY WHETHER OR NOT YOU REQUIRE THEM BACK.

MY 10 FAVOURITE GROUNDS VISITED IN NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL

This month: **ANDY DAKIN (WINSFORD)**

* These grounds are listed in no particular order...

1. BOSTON UNITED

A tremendous sight, Boston's York Street ground is, without doubt, the best in non-league football. In fact, it would not disgrace the Second Division. Three sides have been rebuilt within the last fifteen years or so, and with the pitch having been turned 90° the old main stand holding the dressing rooms is now behind the goal. One of the few non-league grounds to have a completely fenced in away end, a sore point with many Pilgrims fans. No club shop however.

2. DULWICH HAMLET

The Champion Hill ground is of a similar design to many old-style "Amateur Cup" arenas, especially in London, which are rapidly being eaten up by developers. A long, wooden stand stretches the length of one side, but the dominating feature of the ground is the large expanse of cinder and timber terracing on three sides, with the popular side being covered.

3. MOSSLEY

Possibly my favourite non-league venue, the stand side terrace affords some spectacular views of the Pennines. The stand itself is newly constructed, and replaced the old wooden construction condemned in the wake of Bradford. To the right of the stand behind the goal is a very impressive covered terrace, with a low cover running part-way along the opposite touchline. The social club is also worth a visit. Take note however, if you visit other than in August or May, take your woollies!

4. NEWTOWN

A welcome addition to the NPL, Latham Park is set in very pleasant surroundings. The stand, perched on natural banking, holds 200 with players emerging from the dressing room down steps in the centre of the stand. To the left of this is a grass bank with steps of terracing cut into it. Opposite is a barn-like cover with several concrete steps underneath. When I visited last season, Secretary Keith Harding welcomed me personally, with a warmth which runs throughout the club. Well worth a visit.

5. LEEK TOWN

Harrison Park (until recently known as Hamill Park) has been extensively improved over the last couple of years. The main stand has been overhauled, and now includes a glass-fronted directors box. Opposite, three steps of covered terrace runs two thirds of the way along the touchline. There is identical covered terracing behind each goal, even the advertising on the fascia is the same. Personally, I was a little disappointed when the cover was built behind the far goal as it blocked the best view of the ground, from a sandy bank some thirty feet high, rising directly behind the goal. Look out for a club shop opening in the 1989-90 season.

6. MATLOCK TOWN

Another NPL ground with scenic surroundings, Causeway Lane is a three-sided ground, with a cricket pitch behind the far goal. The remainder is a hotch-potch of old stands and covered terracing apart from new covered

terracing behind the goal nearest the turnstiles. The whole set-up is overlooked by Riber Castle, a nineteenth century folly. If a visit is planned, make a day of it. The town is well worth a stroll, and there are several excellent pubs.

7. STALYBRIDGE CELTIC

One of the most well-appointed small grounds I have visited, the Bower Fold stand is perched high above the pitch, with the brick frontage running up to the touchline. Opposite, there is a cover straddling the halfway line, with a similar, good sized covered terrace behind one goal. The other end has open terracing, and here you will find the new club shop. One feature no longer on the ground is the old railway carriage at the open end which used to house the tea-bar.

8. MIDDLEWICH ATHLETIC

This will be considered a strange choice by some, but my formative years as a ground-hopper were spent at Seddon Street watching Mid-Cheshire and then Cheshire League football in the late-60's and early 70's.

A ground with only spartan facilities and minimal cover, it holds one of my most vivid memories, the visit of Leatherhead, complete with Chris Kelly (the Leatherhead Lip) in the Amateur Cup. Two thousand spectators crammed into the ground to see the southerners hit nine goals without reply. After folding in 1985, Athletic have now been reformed, and play in the Crewe and District League.

9. ACCRINGTON STANLEY

Another side on their way back, Accrington have a very neat compact ground, the main feature being a 250-seater stand running from the corner flag some thirty yards along the touchline, and the other side to the halfway line, a similar sized covered terrace. On the other side, covered terracing extends all the way along the touchline. Both ends are open at present, although I believe plans are in hand.

A recent clubhouse extension has meant the demise of the old verandah which had seating for about fifty. Look out for Ruth Chadwick and her son Leslie, whose enthusiasm for both the club and non-league football in general is what the game is all about.

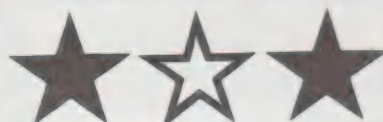
10. NEWTON

No, I'm not repeating myself. Newton FC play at Vista Park in the North West Counties League, and for a club who propped up Division Two for most of last season, the ground is an eye-opener. Completely enclosed, there is terracing on all four sides, with a cover running sixty yards or so along one side, incorporating seats for seventy people. Despite vandalism which has resulted in the loss of the machinery shed due to arson, the ground is well maintained, and is a credit to the hard-working officials.

**NEXT MONTH : ANOTHER
TOP TEN GROUNDS
FEATURE - DON'T MISS
IT!!!**



SMALL ADS



Each month in *Groundhopper Magazine*, we are offering readers the chance to advertise in our Classifieds Section of the magazine. If you require or wish to sell programmes, etc., drop us a line with the details (maximum 50 words in advert) by the end of the month to be guaranteed inclusion in the next issue. Space is very limited, so it will be on a first come, first served basis, and the advert will only appear for one issue. Programme Dealers are excluded from this offer, small ads are for private use only. Write to: *Groundhopper Magazine* Small Ads, 439 Merton Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 5LB. Some ads may be held over due to shortage of space.

* THE Old Black and Green - Aberystwyth Town's Centenary Book. 285 pages. Now reduced - hardback £8, softback £5 plus postage. Make cheques to ATFC.
STEVE MOORE, FRONDEG BUNGALOW, BLAENPLWYF, ABERYSTWYTH, DYFED, SY23 4DG.

* URGENTLY required: rare or unusual non-league programmes, especially from clubs who do not normally issue. Excellent prices paid. Send list and prices to:-
STEVE KING, 439 MERTON ROAD, WANDSWORTH, LONDON, SW18 5LB.

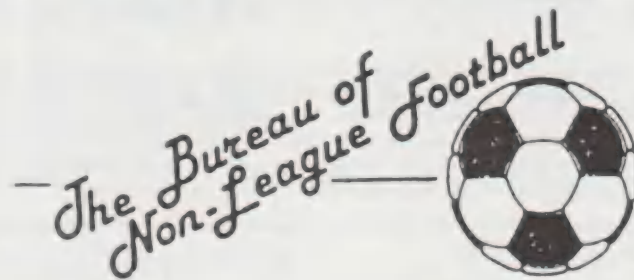
* NOW available! Walton & Hersham metal badges £1.95 including postage and packing. Please order from:-
DARRELL WOOD, 40 TASMAN COURT, SUNBURY-ON-THAMES, MIDDLESEX, TW16.

* NEWPORT AFC 12-page Newsletter of information about the club, includes fixtures, details of Directors, players and Club organisation, plus 2,000 word analysis of the formation of this new club written by Chairman David Hando. 50p + 25p P&P from:-
CLUB SHOP NEWPORT AFC, 91 THE IN-SHOPS, KINGSWAY SHOPPING CENTRE, NEWPORT, GWENT.

PROGRAMME SCENE (Continued from page 13)

season in 1989-90, and they have made a good effort with this programme as it is newsy, informative and good value. There are two pages on the opposition, with teams lined up on the centre page. There is a fun page, plus a page of forthcoming fixtures and a chart showing the pyramid system from the Football League down to County League level for those unfamiliar with it. The back page gives a year-by-year history of Corinthians who were founded in 1882 and shows all their many achievements over the years. They may have fallen on hard times in recent years, but now that they have their own ground and are settled in, this club could well be on the way back. I certainly hope so. Amongst those programmes received for pre-season games, WALTON & HERSHAM issued a basic photocopied 4-page sheet for the visit of a Wimbledon XI on 9.8.89, although it was fully typeset throughout. There are a page of notes and fixtures on the centre pages together with a Commercial column about helping the club financially, and the line-ups are on the back page. When FINCHLEY played Barnet on 8.8.89, little did they realise it would end so embarrassingly for the home club who lost 1-8 and by all accounts it should have been double that score! But for 30p, they did issue a 20-page black and white programme. It has a simple design on the cover, and although very heavy on advertising, it does have the usual information such as league tables, fixtures, news round-up, match reports etc. NETTLEHAM FC entertained Bury Town on 2.8.89 and issued a black and white photocopied 8-pager for 50p including admission. Very basic with no notes about the game, with just a brief introduction to the club which outlines its objectives and guidelines. Teams are listed on the back page. There was a pre-season tournament in Sussex involving six clubs who played in the ARUNDEL Centenary Cup Tournament, and to celebrate, the club issued a large Wembley-size souvenir programme at £2 for 28 pages including a glossy red and white cover. Inside, contents mainly consisted of press cuttings from great moments in the history of Arundel FC, very old photos of former players at Mill Road, history of the six competing clubs who were Arundel, Worthing, Bognor Regis, Wimbledon, Bristol Rovers and Brighton, and the matches went on over two days plus two more to kick off the event on the Friday night. Although the brochure was in a good cause, to help raise money for the club, I found the programme extremely overpriced for what you got and not at all good value.

Well, that's about it for another month. I'm off to the West Country for a few days, but don't despair - I'll be back with another scintillating column in 4 weeks time, when I hope to be reviewing many 1989-90 issues that have been received, including many very unusual items from the smaller clubs. Enjoy your football, and please send in any programmes for review on these pages and I'll do my best to include them in future issues.



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4 PAGE PULL-OUT ON...

MELTON TN.



GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CLUB

GROUND : Egerton Park, Leicester Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.

GROUND TELEPHONE NUMBER : 0664 60350

SECRETARY : Mr C Moulds, 89 Redwood Avenue, Melton Mowbray, Leics, LE13 1TZ.

SECRETARY'S TELEPHONE NUMBER : 0664 500334

FLOODLIGHTS : No

PROGRAMME : Yes, 8 pages for 20p

COLOURS : Red and White stripes

MEMBERS OF : Webster's Yorkshire Bitter Central Midlands Football League - Supreme Division.

CLUB SPONSORS : Mel-Com Communication and Security Ltd.

GROUND CAPACITY : 1,500

COVERED ACCOMMODATION : 50

NUMBER OF SEATS : None

YEAR FORMED : Re-formed in 1972

CLUBHOUSE : Yes, small bar with TV, etc.

CLUB SHOP : No. Programmes at entrance and in clubhouse

TEA-BAR : Yes, rolls and snacks, hot and cold drinks etc

DISTANCE FROM THE TOWN CENTRE : Less than ½ mile.

FINAL LEAGUE POSITION 1988-89 : 15th (out of 17 clubs)

SENIOR HONOURS : Senior League Champions 1983-84
Rolleston Cup Winners 1982-83, 1983-84
Central Midlands Premier Division Cup Winners 1987-88
Third Place Premier Division 1987-88

PREVIOUS LEAGUES : Leicestershire Senior, Leics District.

MANAGER : Kevin Farmer

MIDWEEK MATCH DAY : Tuesday

PRICE OF ADMISSION TO 1st TEAM GAMES : 80p (40p children)

LOCAL NEWSPAPERS : Melton Times, Nottingham Street, Melton Mowbray. Tel: 66666, also Melton Citizen, Leicester Mercury, Burton St, Melton Mowbray. Tel: 62077.

HOW TO GET THERE

For groundhoppers who are based in London, probably the best way of getting to Melton Mowbray is by train. The 113 mile journey takes approximately 1½ to 2 hours, and trains leave from either Kings Cross or St. Pancras with a change at either Peterborough or Leicester.

Examples of train times are as follows on the Kings Cross route:

London Kings X	dep 09.00am
Peterborough	arr 09.46am
Peterborough	dep 10.15am
Melton Mowbray	arr 10.54am

or:

London Kings X	dep 11.10am
Peterborough	arr 11.56am
Peterborough	dep 12.15pm
Melton Mowbray	arr 12.54pm

As Melton Mowbray is an interesting market town, hoppers may wish to get the earlier train to give plenty of time for looking around the town.

And for the return journey:-

Melton Mowbray	dep 17.09pm
Peterborough	arr 17.49pm
Peterborough	dep 17.58pm
London Kings X	arr 18.55pm

For services from St. Pancras, trains leave at 09.00am and 11.30 arriving at Melton Mowbray at 11.09 and 13.09 respectively. You must change at Leicester. Coming back, trains leave M.M at 16.54 and 17.57, getting back to St. Pancras at 19.44 and 19.45 respectively. Fares from London are between £18 and £23 return.

The ground is easily found from the station. Just go up the approach, turn left towards the town centre, keep walking until you reach the top of Burton Street. Turn left into Leicester Street until you see Leicester Bridge. Go over bridge and ground is on the right.

There is a gate leading into Egerton Park as you come off the bridge, but the main entrance to the ground is a further 50 yards down the road on the right.

The total distance from the railway station to the ground is no more than about ½ mile.





THE GROUND & FACILITIES

If you are looking for a ground with plenty of cover, terracing and seating, Egerton Park would not be the place to visit. Melton Town have a rather basic ground with very limited facilities.

Once you reach Egerton Park, the entrance is about 50 yards from the foot of the Leicester Bridge on the right hand side. The ground has an adjacent cricket pitch behind the far end goal which is divided by a green plastic sheet supported by wooden stakes. Around the pitch area there is an iron railing, again supported intermittently by wooden stakes. As you enter the ground, the car park is in front of you with the main complex of dressing rooms, tea bar and clubhouse at the far end. The dressing rooms are housed in a wooden building in brown, and a small tea bar is next to this, and it serves the usual hot and cold drinks, rolls and crisps, etc. Next to this is the clubhouse which is a small portacabin-style building which can hold about 50 comfortably. There is a small bar, TV, etc. This overlooks the football and cricket pitch at the far end of the ground. Both sides of the pitch have a flat standing area running the length of the pitch with about 100 feet of flat grass standing, with the cricket pitch end just having about enough room for a couple of rows of spectators. Behind the entrance end goal (main road side), also has about 100 feet of flat grass standing area, and trees are prominent on three sides, making it quite a picturesque ground. There are two dugouts by the half way line on the opposite side to the clubhouse. There are no floodlights at Egerton Park. As it is also a public park, there isn't a turnstile-type entrance. The main gate is marshalled on matchdays by a steward who collects the money and sells programmes. A road takes you right to the car park at the side of the pitch.

Admission costs 80p (including admission) to 1st team games.



GUIDE TO PHOTOGRAPHS

Front: (Top): The Dressing Rooms at Egerton Park. **(Bottom):** The entrance to the ground which doesn't have a turnstile.

Previous Page (Top): Action from Melton Town's 0-4 home defeat to Harworth CI on the opening day of the season. **(Left):** A splendid view of ground from the river. **(Right):** The clubhouse complex in the far corner of ground. **This Page (Left):** The tea-bar at Egerton Park. **(Right):** A pleasant view of behind the main road goal which is lined by trees.



WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

The splendid Leicestershire market town of Melton Mowbray is well worth a visit, and our advice for Saturday games would be to get there as early as possible to have a look around. The street market is on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and apart from all the big stores such as Woolworths, etc, there are a number of excellent pubs and restaurants and many hotels where accommodation can be had for reasonable rates.

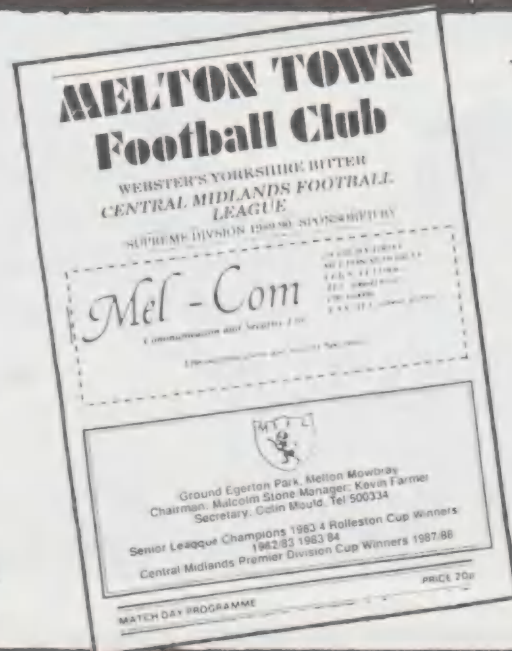
The main area for eating and drinking is in the town centre itself, which is only a few minutes walk from the ground. If you just fancy a pub lunch and a pint or two, you could try The Golden Fleece in Leicester St. which is only 100 yards from the ground by the bridge. This is particularly good for B&B. The Grapes is an Ind Coope pub on the corner of Church Street. The George Hotel in High Street has 3 bars and accommodation but this could be a more expensive place to stay. In Sherrard Street in the town centre, try The Black Swan (Home Brewers). The Half Moon Inn (Bass) serves excellent meals and pub lunches and also has a rear garden for when the weather is good and the White Lion Hotel has accommodation and also serves good meals and lunches. If you are looking for a good old-fashioned English pub serving traditional ales, try The Mash Tub (Hoskins) at the top of Nottingham Street. 50 yards further down is The Kings Head Hotel which has B&B and pub lunches, etc. If you fancy a drink when you leave the station, there is an Ansell's pub called The Noel's Arms just outside the station, and also nearby is Harboro Hotel and Boat Inn pubs.

There are plenty of restaurants and fast-food places, and as Melton Mowbray is home of the famous pork-pies, can you afford to miss out on Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe in Nottingham Street?

Stilton Cheese is also produced in this area, and many places stock it in the town.

The market stalls which are laid out in the market place on Saturdays, can get extremely crowded, especially in the summer and just before Christmas, but with the character and selection of eating and drinking establishments to choose from from this fine market town, a visit to Melton Mowbray will not leave you disappointed. As the clubhouse is extremely small at the ground, you are advised to eat and drink in the town first anyway. For those staying overnight, if you want something a little livelier than a pub, try Tubes Disco which is open until very late.





PROGRAMME DETAILS

Melton Town are, this season, issuing an 8 page programme with a cover price of 20p. It is printed on white paper and uses black ink, with a simple cover design (see left). This just has the club name, advert for the club sponsors and brief details about the club, etc. The inside front page is full of adverts, while the next page has a column by new manager Kevin Farmer + an advert. The centre pages have the familiar format of team line-ups with adverts around the edge of the pages. The next page lists the club's forthcoming fixtures and also results for the season so far. The inside back page is again full of adverts, as is the back page of the programme. All in all, for 20p it isn't particularly good value as the only written content is a few lines on page 3 by the manager, but for all that, they are issued for all 1st-team games. Available from entrance + clubhouse.

PLACES OF INTEREST NEARBY

If you are staying overnight or wish to see other areas nearby to Melton Mowbray, there are many places of interest for groundhoppers. If you enjoy visiting Historic houses, there is Belvoir Castle which is 12 miles away. It has impressive views from the Castle of the surrounding vale, superb gardens and restaurant. There is also Oakham Castle, Burghley House, Belton House and Woolsthorpe Manor. At Cottesmore, you can visit the Rutland Railway Museum, and there is a Brewery Museum at Stamford. For those energetic enough to require a long walk, try the Jubilee Way, a 15½ mile waymarked walk mostly on field and woodland paths between Melton and Woolsthorpe in the Vale of Belvoir or try Rutland Water - Woodland and lakeside walks. This is an area of outstanding beauty, the largest man-made lake in England, 5 miles long with a perimeter of 24 miles. There are 350 acres of nature reserve, trout fishing, sailing, walking, cycling, lakeside parking for 3,000 cars. There are some very picturesque villages nearby which include Asfordby, Bottesford, Gaddesby, Moby, Kington, Waltham-on-the-Wolds, etc, many with fine churches and castles as the main tourist attraction. Leicestershire is a superb county and a visit should be very pleasant.

SUMMARY

To summarise, Melton Town is well worth visiting, not necessarily because the ground at Egerton Park is anything special - it is basic to say the least, but whether you plan just a day trip or a weekend, the town of Melton Mowbray itself is enjoyable. There are plenty of interesting places within a few miles of Melton, and on the plus side, for groundhoppers travelling from London, it isn't too far to travel for a Saturday match, being just a 40 minute journey by train from Peterborough. Also, when you get there, the ground is just minutes away from the station and even less from the market town centre. The club issue a basic programme which has little in the way of content, but at least they do issue, and there are plenty of pubs, restaurants and fast-food places in town as well as numerous places to stay. Unfortunately, the team are not doing that well, last season finishing 3rd from bottom of the Supreme Division of the Central Midlands League, and on the opening day of the 1989-90 season, lost 0-4 at home to Harworth C.I. which suggests it could be another long, hard, season for Melton Town. They have just appointed a new manager in Kevin Farmer who has introduced some new players to the club, but whether they will be good enough to improve on last season's low league position, only time will tell. On their showing on the opening day of the new season, it would appear that a lot of work is needed to get the team right.

MAP



Kevin Farmer.

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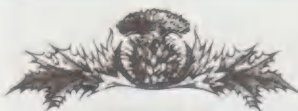
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TARTAN

with Raymond Jarvie

TRAVELS



One of the most ambitious clubs in Scottish non-league football is Annan Athletic from the East of Scotland League. Situated halfway between Dumfries and Carlisle, Annan played in the South of Scotland League from 1977. However, after winning all the local competitions, except the Challenge Cup, regularly they decided to seek a higher standard of football. All really available to them was the EOSL which after two rejections accepted Annan in 1987. The league was being reconstructed into Premier and First Divisions and Annan were invited into the new set up. Their first season was extremely successful as they won the First Division championship. Last season, consolidation was their target and despite a flirtation with the relegation zone in the early weeks, did enough to stay up. A tremendous 5-1 thrashing of eventual champions Gala Fairydean did their cause no harm at all. Watch out for Annan Athletic this season.

The highspot of last season was their qualification for the Scottish Cup which after a first round bye were drawn at home to the first-ever winners Queen's Park. 1100 crammed into Galabank for the tie. Galabank is rather basic although facilities are improving all the time. Behind the goal at



ABOVE: Annan Athletic FC, Galabank.

the entrance is a very impressive brick clubhouse which also incorporates the dressing rooms. Along the far side is a covered enclosure which holds around 50. Although whether this is still intact is not known as young lads with Rangers scarves were doing their best to dismantle it!

The rest of the ground is flat grass standing but there is some banking on the road side. Behind the other goal is a floodlit training area.

Annan issued an excellent programme for this game. 24 pages for 50p, this was only their third ever programme. The first was v. Stranraer in 1979 and the second for an away match at Ayr in 1986. Both were Scottish Cup ties.

Annan's best bet for progress may have been to follow the example of neighbours Gretna (9 miles away) into English football and move up through the pyramid, but they have stuck with their Scottish roots, and it will be interesting to see what the future holds for them.

Some Scottish bits 'n pieces...

The official opening of St. Johnstone's McDiarmid Park will be on October 17, v. Manchester United (subject to League approval)....Clachnacuddin's bid to sell their ground and share with Caledonian has fallen through and it looks

like they will remain at Grant Street for the time being....Newtongrange Star have arranged to sell their Victoria Park ground and move to another part of the village in the next couple of years.

Scottish Qualifying Cup draw 2-9-89

Round 1 North

Caledonian v. Rothes

Buckie Thistle v. Forres Mechanics

Huntly v. Wick Academy

Inverness Thistle v. Lossiemouth

Round 1 South

Newton Stewart v. Glasgow University

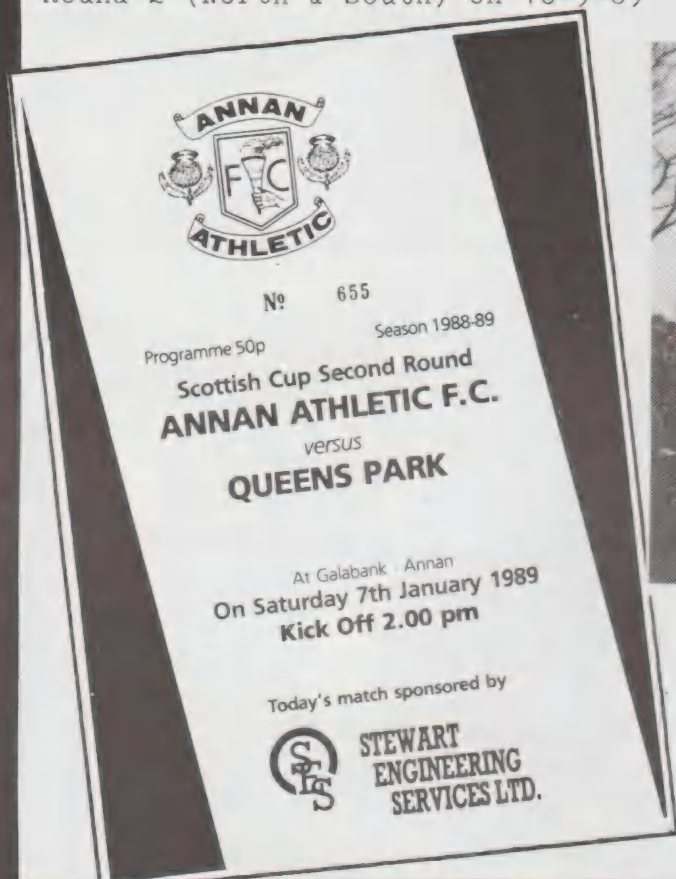
Whitehill Welfare v. Edinburgh University

Dalbeattie Star v. Wigtown & Bladnoch

Round 2 (North & South) on 16-9-89



ABOVE: Annan Athletic v. Queens Park on 7.1.89 at Galabank.



IT'S BRIGGSY CALLIN' (Continued from page 34)

Behind a screen of trees is the pitch, which is totally railed off and includes floodlights. On one side of it is covered accommodation for 100, and on the other are the trainers' boxes, social club and dressing rooms. The covered accommodation, which was only recently erected at the 3,000 capacity ground, has a few advertising boards in front of it.

Eighteen miles east of Winchester towards West Sussex is the town of Petersfield. Petersfield United play at quite a picturesque 4,000 capacity ground in division two (south) of the Vauxhall-Opel League at Love Lane, a dead end road that goes through a housing estate. Love Lane is 10 minutes' walk from the town station, heading towards London. The Lane is the first turning on your left if heading towards the big city on the A3 circulatory system.

The football club's base is right at the end of Love Lane, and there is a car park outside the ground, which is surrounded by a six feet tall fence. The pitch is entirely railed off, and has a side to side slope.

On one side of the field is a posh grandstand with individual seats for 100 people. The other side of the ground boasts a smart social club/dressing rooms complex, trainers' boxes and two sections of covered accommodation, each providing shelter for about 50 people. The ground also has floodlights.

Just crossing the county border westwards into Wiltshire will take you to the ground of Wiltshire League outfit Laverstock and Ford. Laverstock and Ford are two villages a mile apart and one mile from Salisbury, separated by the A30 heading out towards Basingstoke.

The club are based in Laverstock, which also boasts a big senior school, and the ground, Laverstock and Ford Sports Club, is in the main street. It has a big car park and social club, although there is no cover or floodlighting. The pitch, like Petersfield's, has a side to side slope, plus trainers' boxes, while there are also training lights at the ground. There is also another pitch adjacent to the main one.

So why not take a trip out to Hampshire one day and visit some of the clubs mentioned in this article? And don't forget, in the same sort of area are clubs like Alton, Fareham Town and Gosport Borough. Gosport of the Beazer Homes League play at Privett Park in Privett Road in this large south coast town. It has a population of 80,000.

Privett Park, with a capacity of 5,000, features a nice social club and well-stocked club shop, while on one side of the completely fenced off pitch is cover for 500 people. On the other side of the pitch, which features floodlights, is a superb grandstand with a capacity of 500.



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Bishop Auckland in the quarter shirts, defend a centre during their Guinness Durham Challenge Cup Semi-Final at Billingham Synthonia. Synners won 1-0 and went on to take the cup.
Photo: NIGEL ATKINSON



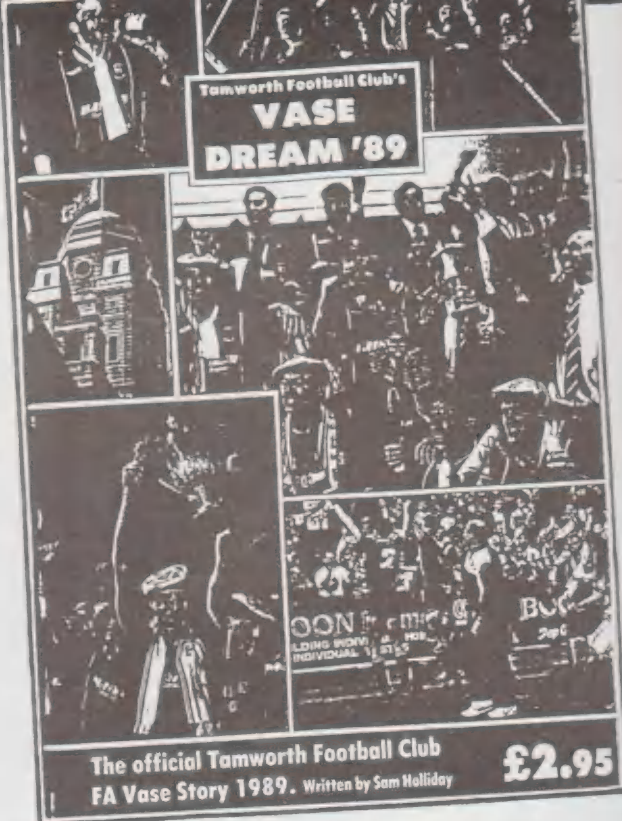
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REJECTED FC - VOLUME 2

This excellent book carries on where Volume 1 left off. This time containing 480 pages, there are sections on clubs such as Accrington Stanley, Southport, Merthyr, Gainsborough Trinity, Darwen, plus many more ex-Football League clubs, plus excellent old photos of the grounds, programmes, maps, etc. It covers the basic facts and statistics and many of the illustrations have never been published before, some going back to 1879, including illustrated plan views and information for present day locations. It covers the histories of up to 12 more ex-Football League clubs, with author Dave Tyddell going to great lengths in researching the facts and providing an informative, entertaining book that is well worth the price of £11.95. It contains over 30% more pages than Volume 1, making it particularly good value, and whether you are young or old, this will make fascinating reading. Very highly recommended because it goes where no other book has managed to go before. Copies of Rejected FC Volume 2 can be obtained from Dave Tyddell, 12 The Furrows, Harefield, Middx, UB9 6AT. Price is £11.95 + £1.40 P&P or available from Sportspages Bookshop in London. Please try to include a self-addressed adhesive label if possible.

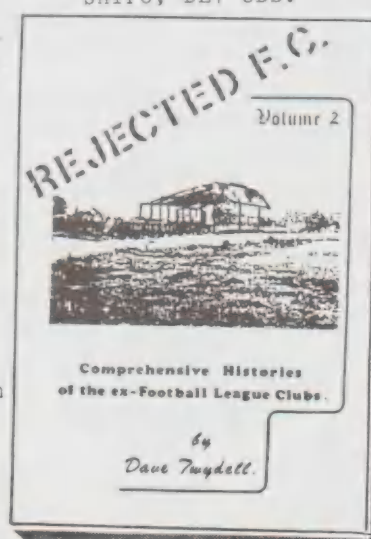
VASE DREAM '89

Tamworth's greatest moment came last season when they won the FA Vase Final in a replay at Peterborough United, and to celebrate the club have produced an excellent 36-page full-colour A4 size brochure at £2.95. It is the official Tamworth FC FA Vase story 1989, written by Sam Holliday, Sports Editor of the Tamworth Herald newspaper. It is good value because it is on glossy paper throughout, and there is virtually no advertising at all except on the inside front page. There are dozens of excellent photos of the rounds leading up to the final with many fine action shots of goals and near misses. It is in 16 sections starting with 'Getting to Wembley' and then 'The build up' and 'The fans travel' and 'Here we go' etc, that builds up into a complete record of the event from start to finish. There are very good colour photos too, particularly on the attractive cover and centre pages. All in all, a marvellous souvenir of a memorable occasion. Interesting whether you are a Tamworth fan or not. £2.95 from Tamworth FC or £3.50 by post from Pete Young, Tamworth FC, Kettlebrook, Tamworth, Staffs. Cheques payable to Tamworth FC.



THE NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST F.L. A COMPLETE RECORD

This booklet, compiled by Stan Wilton, has 90 plus A4 size pages, and gives a complete record of results, clubs, leading goalscorers tables, League Cup results, etc, for all Divisions including reserves. This has been produced with League permission, and is available from early September at £3 per copy including postage. There is a foreword by the League Chairman and then follows a comprehensive record of facts and figures from 1982-83 to date, all laid out simply, containing results charts for each season, league tables, League Cup results round-by-round, etc, as well as a complete playing record of each club since 1982-83. It is very well put together, and for those who are fascinated by facts and figures, this will be an interesting purchase. It is admitted by editor Stan Wilton in his Editorial that the production of the booklet has been undertaken on a "home-made" basis, thus containing the production costs to a reasonable level. Printed on loose-leaf A4 paper and held together with a plastic strip at the side, it is nevertheless a good investment for anyone who likes to keep up to date with statistical information. Send £3 (includes P&P) to Mr S Wilton, at "Haven Holme" 57 Main Road, Smalley, Derbyshire, DE7 6DS.



The Northern Counties East Football League



IRD OF RESULTS

STAN WILTON

BIRMINGHAM BONUS

On a recent trip to Birmingham, I managed to mix business and pleasure, the main purpose of my visit being a major exhibition at the NEC. I also managed, however, to fit in visits to seven new grounds.

On my way back to the hotel after the first day (having taken half an hour to locate my car in the confusion of car parks around the centre) I took a short detour to Warwick, which is best known for its magnificent castle, but in recent seasons, Racing Club Warwick FC have also been making a name for themselves, including winning the Midland Combination championship in 1988. The ground, which is easy to find as it backs onto the racecourse, which is just off the B4095 Warwick-Redditch road, is a bit disappointing. A wooden rail runs around the pitch, there is a small covered standing area and a 100-seater stand but there are no floodlights and the paintwork requires some attention.

Continuing my journey I came across another ground, completely by accident. The ground in Loxley Road, Wellesbourne turned out, on closer inspection, to be the home of the local team who play in the Second Division of the Midland Combination. A smart clubhouse and Dressing Room complex is situated behind one goal and the pitch is railed off on all four sides. There is no cover other than in the clubhouse, but the ground is enclosed on three sides with a small childrens playground on the fourth.

On my way back to the exhibition the following day I called in at Hampton Road, home of another Combination side, Knowle. In contrast to Warwick it looked freshly painted and well maintained. There is a car parking area just inside the main gate, on the far side is the grandstand with yellow and black seats capable of seating 50, with further cover for 250. The remainder of the ground is hard standing. The clubhouse has seating for 60 and there is also a tea-bar. In common with the majority of clubs in the league, Knowle do not have floodlights.

Next day saw me heading for home, or at least in the general direction as there were several grounds I intended to visit along the way. First stop was Wilmcote (between Stratford & Henley in Arden). Wilmcote play at 'The Patch' which is in the centre of the village behind the working men's club. The village itself is well worth visiting being full of timbered houses, old churches and immaculate gardens. Back to the ground which has a small metal shelter for 50-60 people alongside the far touchline, the rest of the ground is flat standing, once again all four sides are railed off. Leaving Wilmcote I headed for Stratford (whose team, like Wilmcote also play in the Midland Combination). However, as a result of bad directions and the lack of a good map, I failed to locate the ground but did at least get to see most of Stratford!

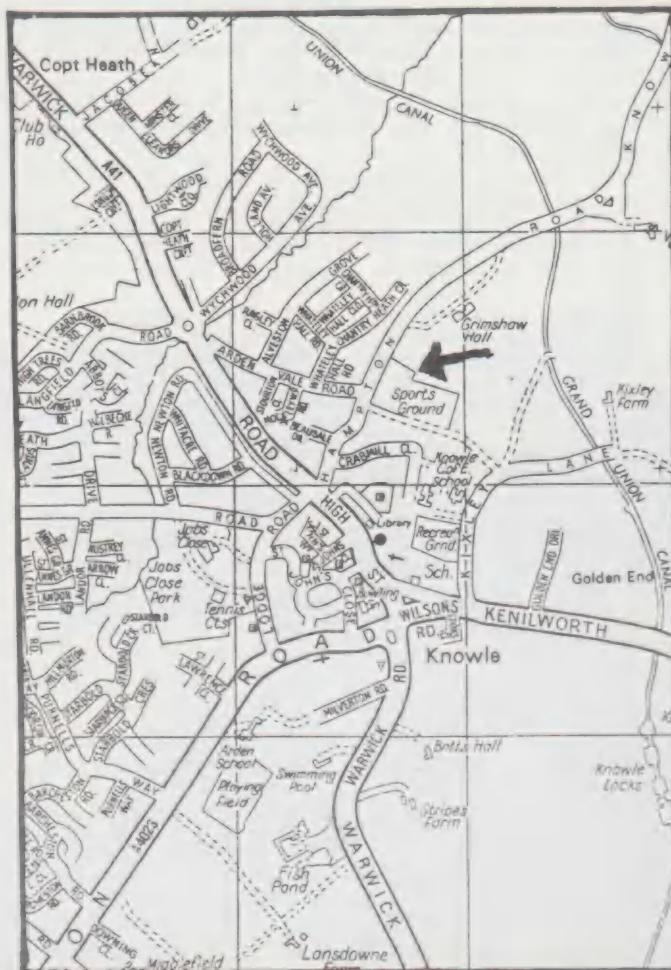
Onwards onto the A34 Stratford-Oxford road and roughly halfway between the two is the turning off to the market town of Chipping Norton, on the edge of the Cotswolds. Proceeding through the market place you turn left into Waterbush Road and then right into Hailey Road, the ground is then immediately on your right. The Federated Homes (formerly Hellenic) League is one of my favourites as all the grounds seem to be smart, well maintained, have good facilities and are situated in picturesque towns and villages, and Chipping Norton was no exception to this. Based at the top of a hill and somewhat

exposed, the ground is nonetheless of a high standard. The club's nickname is 'The Magpies' and it is not hard to imagine what the club colours are, especially as the rail around the pitch, the covered accommodation (which has room for 300 and also includes a press box) are all smartly painted in black and white. There are also floodlights and a social club to the right of the main entrance.

Last stop was at Abingdon, home of both United (Federated Homes) and Town (Vauxhall Football League). Once again, I was not disappointed, Abingdon nestles beside the Thames with numerous small boats and pleasure craft moored alongside the town's bridge. Both the town's grounds are of a high standard and since my visit both clubs have acquired further seating from Oxford City's stadium. Abingdon Town (just accepted into the VFL from the Greene King Spartan League) have had their impressive ground featured in a previous edition, so on to United's Northcourt Road home, which is situated 1 mile north of the A4183 Abingdon-Oxford road. There is a small stand and floodlights but this ambitious club have plans for a new clubhouse as well as the additional seating that has also been installed.

So I wended my weary way home after three highly enjoyable days, a successful exhibition at the vast and impressive NEC, visits to seven new grounds, picturesque towns and villages, well known landmarks and glorious sunshine. What more can one ask for!

BY GRAHAM MITCHELL



HOPPER POST

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IN A FIX

Geoff Austin's letter in the August issue brought to the attention some high scoring but the 22-2 score paled into insignificance in comparison to the high farce in last season's Gravesend League Div.3.

With one game remaining, Blue Circle were two points behind leaders New Falcon (still two points for a win in this league) and with an inferior goal difference needed to beat bottom of the table Rodenstock 46-0 to win the title on goal difference. In fact, they won by an amazing 51-0 which not surprisingly brought hails of 'fix' from New Falcon who registered a protest to the league which was upheld and the game replayed, with Circle managing a mere 26-0 win and thus having to be content with runners-up spot!

PAUL HARRISON,
GRAVESEND, KENT.

FOOTBALL TRAINING!

I thought you may be interested to know how my friend and I have used the train strikes to our "hopping" advantage. As we both work in London and owing to the dispute, we found ourselves with an unscheduled day off each week, so we jumped in the car and went down to do our laundry in a laundro-mat near to a non-league ground!

So far, we have been to Fleet Town, Wokingham, Bracknell and Newbury. Our schedule is roughly as follows:-

- 9.30am - Get up and go through our files to decide which ground to visit.
- 9.45am - Check Yellow Pages and Thomson Local for laundrettes and cross-reference these with the appropriate A-Z to find the nearest one to a football club.
- 10.00am - Depart for destination with our laundry in the boot.
- 10.30am (approx) - Arrive at launderette, put washing in and then "do" the ground while our smalls and shirts go through the motions.
- 11.30am - We then retrieve our washing and take the film of the photos we have taken to the nearest 'One Hour' developer.
- 12.45pm (approx) - We retire (with our clean washing and photos) to the nearest pub for a well-earned half and a bite to eat.

I wonder if any other "hoppers" can say they have managed to turn the inconvenience of the rail dispute to their advantage?

KEVIN WATSON
READING, BERKS.

READING THE SMALL PRINT

I have just received the September issue of the excellent "Groundhopper Magazine" - in July! But my free magnifying glass must have fallen out of the envelope!

Well, how is one expected to read the cup draws without one?

Come on, please use larger print, as such small print makes it difficult to read and

spoils an otherwise excellent publication.

GARRY CLARKE,
WARRINGTON,
CHESHIRE.

SUMMER HOLIDAY

While on holiday on the island of Majorca with my wife and family, it hadn't really been my intention to watch football. We stayed at a hotel in the resort of Alcudia on the north side of the island (which can be recommended for marvellous beaches and scenery). We were out for a walk when I spotted 4 floodlight pylons which obviously wasn't for industrial use. Sure enough, when we got nearer we came upon a small football ground which was surrounded by trees and bushes. The pitch was compacted sand with a stand running one side of the field (see photo). My problem was to try



ABOVE: Alcudia FC's ground on the Island of Majorca.

to find out whether the season was finished and if not, when was the next match? The fact that my Spanish was limited to ordering two beers was a serious handicap, but undeterred I asked a passer-by, which was met with a blank expression! My wife, of course, thought I must be suffering from heatstroke for even asking. Next line of approach was the Tourist Information Office where a very helpful lady said she would make a phone-call and told me to come back tomorrow. Sure enough, on returning she assured me that Alcudia were playing Fermento in a Third Division game next Sunday, kick-off was either 4-5 or 6pm! The admission charge to the ground was £3.50 (or 700 pesetas) for men and £2 (400 pesetas) for women which is the Spanish answer to sexual equality. The admission ticket was the size and printing quality of that of a Wembley final, but unfortunately a rather

large Spanish gateman insisted I hand it over so spoiling my idea of keeping it as a souvenir. The match itself was disappointing with plenty of individual playing skill but no-one prepared to have a shot at goal, hence the 0-0 scoreline. I enjoyed the afternoon out and I had a few beers from an outside bar area which also incorporated a childrens play park (rather a surprising feature). My advice to any groundhoppers thinking of watching a match while on holiday in Majorca is:- 1). Use the Tourist Information Office 2). Don't argue with large Spanish gatemen and 3). Take a crash course in the Spanish language.

PETER B. HINDMARCH,
BLYTH, NORTHUMBERLAND.

SPOTTING THE TV GROUND

TV viewers of the recent "Manageress" series on Channel 4 were probably not very impressed with the footballing content (although the drama side was reasonable); amongst other oddities was the fictional team that appeared to play all their home and away games at Reading's Elm Park!

Funny crowds they got too, since the same sections booed and cheered the club! But did anybody else spot the location of the club's training ground? It was a defunct club's headquarters (to be featured in my "More Defunct FC" book in a few months time). The photo shows a similar view to some of



the shots in the TV programme, and the following clues may identify the club to some astute (or old!) groundhoppers:

1. It was once rumoured that Charlton Athletic were going to move to this town.
2. The club was formed independently of this town's Senior club, but the two later com-

bined, only to split once again a few years later.

3. They played in the Spartan League for a while.
 4. The ground was/is in Belfast Avenue.
 5. They were the opponents in the last game played by a famous Amateur team.
 6. They were formed originally in 1937, but retired from Senior football in 1956.
 7. They were their County's Senior Cup winners on three occasions.
 8. Their record attendance was approx. 6,000 in a friendly with Q.P.R.
- So as not to spoil it for anyone wishing to think about it for a while, the answer is at the foot of the page.

DAVE TWYDELL,
HAREFIELD, MIDDX.

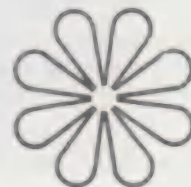
RARE SNAP

Groundhoppers may be interested in this photograph of a pre-season friendly between Braintree Town (light shirts) and Saffron Walden Town (3-1 to Braintree). So what? you are asking.

Well, it is unusual because it was played at The John Ray Street Stadium in Braintree, which hasn't been used for senior football since the 1950's when Braintree's (then Crittall Athletic) reserve team played there.

The grandstand dates back to the 1930's and must be one of, if not the oldest cantilever grandstands in the country. Does anyone know of an older one? The Braintree player in possession is Roger Osborne, scorer of Ipswich's winning FA Cup Final goal. The other Braintree player is Julian Lamb.

JON WEAVER,
BRAINTREE, ESSEX.



ANSWER TO MYSTERY GROUND

The club was "Slough Centre FC" and the amateur team mentioned in Clue 5 was Pegasus FC.





IT'S

BRIGGSY CALLIN'

**WITH RICHARD BRIGGS****THIS MONTH: FOOTBALL IN HAMPSHIRE**

You may remember a few months ago I touched on football in Hampshire, covering such clubs as Winchester City and Stockbridge. Well, after another visit to the area, I can bring you a second 'Groundhopping in Hampshire' article.

The Wessex League has a number of Hampshire-based clubs as members, and by far the best is AFC Totton's Testwood Park ground. Totton is a westerly suburb of Southampton, and the ground is in Testwood Place, a residential area.

Testwood Place is off Testwood Lane, which is off Library Road. Library Road joins the town's main roundabout in the shopping centre. Testwood Park has a capacity of about 3,000. At one end of the pitch, which is completely railed off, is the car park, social club and dressing rooms block. On the near side of the ground as you enter is covered terracing for about 200 people, while on the far side is a magnificent 200 seater grandstand, opened in 1985, which includes a directors' box with tip-up seats. The ground features advertising boards and has four very impressive floodlight pylons, each with four bulbs.

Another Wessex League side based in the Southampton suburbs is Sholing Sports. Sholing, formed in 1914, were once, like Totton, in the Hampshire League and really dominated it. Their ground, Birch Lawn, is in Northwest Road, and is a little run down. It has a capacity of about 2,000, and is surrounded by a high fence. On one side of the pitch, which is railed off, is covered accommodation for about 100 people, and on the other side a grandstand with a capacity of 100 and some impressive trainers' boxes.

There is also a little terracing on this side of the ground, which features floodlights and advertising boards. You can't really miss the ground when you are in Northwest Road, as the car park, social club and dressing rooms complex are right by the roadside.

A visit to Southampton would not be complete without calling in at The Dell, home of Barclays league first division outfit Southampton. This is one of the best grounds I have seen, with a capacity of around 25,000. It is in Milton Road, which is in fact quite near Hampshire County Cricket Club's base in the city. There is a large players' and officials' car park and club shop beside the stadium, which has uncovered terracing at each end.

On one side of the ground is the main grandstand, with space for around 40 newspapermen, which is a real luxury when compared to the cramped press-boxes of the Vauxhall-Opel or Beazer Homes League, or the complete lack of them in a lower strata of soccer!

Beneath this stand are the trainers' boxes, and on the other side of the pitch is another stand, beneath which are a few rows of bench seats. The floodlights are perched on the roof of the stands. Walking inside the bowels of the stands, beneath the rows of seats, is quite an experience, as the corridors go on and on and on, although they can't compete with the catacombs of Wembley Stadium!

Eastleigh is a town with a population of around 55,000 situated six miles north of Southampton. It is famous for its airport. Eastleigh FC, formed in 1946, play in the Wessex League, and their ground, Ten Acres, is clearly visible from the M27's eastbound carriageway.



ABOVE : Gosport Borough's Privett Park ground. Photo : RICHARD BRIGGS

Ten Acres is in Stoneham Lane and features a large car park and wooden social club/dressing rooms complex. The ground has a capacity of 3,000, the record attendance being set in 1975 against Southampton in a floodlight opener.

The pitch, which is partly backed by trees, is railed off and obviously features floodlights, but the only cover is provided by a grandstand-cum-section of covered accommodation which runs along one side of the pitch. It features standing room for 200 and a few rows of seats for about 100 people, while in front of it are the trainers' boxes.

Romsey is a town with a population of about 13,000 famed for Broadlands, the home of the late Lord Mountbatten. It is 11 miles from Winchester and eight from Southampton. Romsey Town, (formed 1885) of the Wessex League play at the By-pass Ground, which is on the A27 on the Southampton edge of the town. The pitch is near the town's sports complex, and you drive into a rather bumpy car park.

Continued on page 27



Viking Sports' Peter Wilson shoots wide with only Penhial 'keeper Terry Brown to beat during the 0-0 draw on 18.3.89. Alt:25. Photos: A. HILLIER

NON- LEAGUE



ACTION



Pembroke Borough player-manager Peter Fearn saves at the feet of an Abergavenny Thursday forward which Pembroke won 1-0 at Penypound in the National Division of the Abacus Welsh League. Photo: STEVE MOORE

LEO'S LINES....

★★★★★★



★★★★★★

A review of
the interest-
ing non-league
stories during
the past
month... by
LEO HOENIG

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MONTH**

Ah! the joys of winter - yes folks, the football season is back, and here am I on a Sunday morning with nothing to do but read the football results in the paper, and catch up on a couple of articles that I should have written a week or more ago. Of course, as I write this only one Saturday has passed for most leagues (and the GM Vauxhall Conference and HFS Loans Leagues have yet to start) but at least we have an illustration of the major story I've been covering during the summer - the fates of Newport County's successors, and their near neighbours Barry Town's attempts to escape from Welsh to English football. There was, in fact, no result for Newport County, the latest attempt to get the side resurrected failed when, just five days before the season was due to start, they were summarily booted out of the Vauxhall Football League. It appears that far from sorting out everything to the satisfaction of the FA of Wales, the local council, and of course, the Liquidator, Mr Sherman and his cohorts could not even raise the money to pay the annual subscription to their supposed saviours, the VFL. One can only now hope that the rats have finally gone down with the sinking ship, and this will be the last we hear from this story - except the collective sound in the distance of the VFL management committee wiping the egg from their faces. This brings me to the most surprising part of the attempt to bring Newport into the Vauxhall Football League. Why should this league, famed across the land as the greatest sticklers for rules, heavy fines and standards actually allow County to be accepted into their league before they could prove they had the wherewithal to get off the ground? As many non-league fans have asked, not least the denizens of Wolverhampton, Edgware and East Thurrock, is there one rule for the majority and another when it comes to a "famous name"? It is unlikely that we will ever know why the VFL decided to elect Newport. Were they seduced by the chance of pulling off the rescue in the face of national publicity, or if they were persuaded, against their better judgements by someone with the gift of the gab - or perhaps the clubs themselves overruled the management committee to bring Newport in? (No, that is too much to accept - clubs are only supposed to be lobby fodder to the administrators wishes, and it is, of course, too easy to ensure that Newport's case would not be considered if the committee were against it).

The name Newport, of course, lives on, and at Moreton Town's ground, Newport AFC have started their life with a victory over Pegasus Juniors - the only goal scored by Norman Parsello, receiving the ball from that veteran of Welsh and West football, Barrie Vassallo. I have yet to be convinced that a Welsh club, playing in deepest Gloucestershire is viable, but at least they have an

advantage in that County are not now running a spoiling action from their home town. Success on the field is now a requirement if they are to continue to persuade supporters to follow them by coach from Gwent, and the first match will be typical, in so far as the home supporters will have travelled further than those from the visiting club. Newport AFC have been accepted this season into both the Gloucestershire Senior Trophy and the Welsh FA Cup, highlighting their almost schizophrenic state. Now they are off the ground, the priority must be to get the FA of Wales to accept them as a member, and to move back into the Newport area. Once there they will need to get a ground that will allow them not only to continue to play in the Federated Homes League, but to move up with their ambitions at least to the Beazer Homes League, if not the GMVC itself, so I doubt if Somerton Park would be suitable.

Meanwhile, Barry Town took their place in the Beazer Homes League at the end of their saga of trying to move from the Welsh League, where they had won the championship six times in their seven year stay. At the start of the close season, the FAW had given Barry Town permission to apply to join the BHL; but there was then little chance of them getting accepted. Since the BHL now has agreements with nine feeder leagues over promotion and relegation, it cannot accept outsiders easily and at the AGM, they stuck strictly to their own rules, relegating the bottom four clubs and promoting from the feeders. But after this, things got a bit confused. Barry decided to apply instead to the Federated Homes League, but the FAW now decided to forbid the move. Then Coventry Sporting folded, after finding themselves without a ground as their landlords (Ansells Brewery) were selling it for development. Barry Town were then able to fill the space left in the BHL, as the FAW were in no position (having already sanctioned such a move) to object.

I see that Coventry Sporting, meanwhile, are making various claims about everyone except themselves, as the cause of their sudden demise. The club had been hoping to find alternative accommodation for some time, but a bid to use the Butts Stadium had been turned down by the council, who would not give them the sort of lease required to play in the BHL. Other options were under consideration, but there is no truth other than the club, who have never been able to repeat their success of the mid-seventies when they reached the second round of the FA Cup, as a West Midlands League side were living far beyond their means in the BHL, with crowds sometimes as low as twenty, and no fairy godmother to pour in the money. It is always true that a club wants to progress, and to reach the highest level possible. But for a small club, there is a limit on how

far you can go, and it is clearly never sustainable when a club goes on living beyond their means. The Coventry area is already well served with clubs at BHL level in neighbouring Bodworth and Nuneaton, and the recent revival of Coventry City's form also added to the erosion of Sporting's base of support.

Still, I intended to keep this piece mainly to deal with Welsh football. Over the last few years, the FA of Wales have tried to block the movement of clubs to English football, as never before. Two clubs have felt the brunt of this, Newtown and Barry Town; both of whom have now moved out of Welsh football. The reason for this is the Welsh dream of a truly National League, and hence a place in European and UEFA Cups. However, all such attempts have failed so far - the so-called National division of the Welsh League has never managed to persuade clubs to join from the North of the Country, or even from Central Wales, with the sole exception of Aberystwyth Town. An attempt to produce a Welsh Northern Premier League, to take the best sides from the Daily Post Alliance, the Wrexham and Central Wales Leagues appears also to have fallen through, after disagreements among the clubs involved. With ten of the country's leading clubs playing their football in England it is questionable that even a National League would give Wales the place in Europe it craves. As far as European competition is concerned, Wales is already an oddity. It is surely the largest nation in UEFA without a national league, and it is the only one to enter the Cup-Winners Cup without taking up positions in the other competitions. Indeed, not since Borough United in 1963 has the Welsh club in Europe played their domestic football

in Wales (Borough United). Other countries, like Liechtenstein, Andorra and even Monaco, of all these small countries which have their sides playing in other nations leagues (Swiss, Spanish, and French respectively) have no European representation unless they gain it through the host country's system (achieved, I believe, only by AS Monaco, of all these small countries, but then AS Monaco are an oddity, having been French champions recently, but with crowds not big enough to pay Glenn Hoddle's wages). Wales, of course, is bigger than these places, none of which have played international competition either. However, just because Welsh football is unlikely to be able to escape being tied to the English, surely it does not mean there can not be a Welsh champion. What Wales needs now is a midweek league, to play for the title. This would have to be small, as even if just the ten clubs competing in England were involved, then an extra 18 matches would place an impossible burden on the clubs involved. I suggest that only six clubs compete (originally the three in the Football League, plus Merthyr, Bangor and Caernarfon), with a second division consisting of the rest of the clubs in English football (Newtown, Barry, Rhyl and Colwyn Bay) plus the champions of the various internal Welsh Leagues. The winner of this would then challenge for a place in the Championship group, probably by a play-off match. The winner would be without doubt the Champion club of all Wales (Cardiff would start as favourites, of course), and so could take their place, with pride in European competition. Anyone got any better ideas?

PS: Attendance for Newport AFC's opening fixture was 594!



Coming soon...Special Feature on **DAN-AIR** BY GRAHAM MITCHELL **LEAGUE** The Clubs, Grounds, & More

BEAZER VIZA (Continued from page 40)

Norman from Wycombe Wanderers, completing a strong back four with ex-Harrow Borough Paul Morris (last season's Player of The Year) and well-travelled Alan Risk who at the time of writing is contemplating whether travelling from the far side of London is going to prove too much of a problem.

Our new signings were all prominent in our opening pre-season Friendly: an impressive 6-3 win at Vauxhall League Windsor & Eton. Kelly notched two on his debut. And so the new League campaign draws near - that exciting first day when all start equal and all have high hopes in their hearts. It will be an emotional season for Wealdstone, having to say goodbye to Lower Mead next May. I hope next month to cover my trips to Alvechurch, Bromsgrove Rovers and Dorchester Town - I hope you'll join me.

BEAZER VIA



with **TOBY JACKSON**

Welcome to my new column which will follow my travels with Wealdstone around the clubs of the Beazer Homes (Southern) League Premier Division. This month I start at base with a look around Lower Mead Stadium in Harrow, the home for one last season of Wealdstone Football Club.

I first came to live in the Harrow area in 1965 and, being already interested in Non-League soccer, took a quick look at all the local clubs to see which I fancied following. The best game I saw was a local derby between Harrow Borough and Wembley, but there was something special about Lower Mead which took me back and which has kept me coming back ever since.

It has been an eventful few seasons at Lower Mead since becoming the only club in the history of Non-League soccer to win the "Double" of Gola League (now GMVC) and F.A. Trophy in the 84/85 season. Our accomplished Manager during that wonderful season was Brian Hall who instilled a tactical discipline into his players second to none. Coupling the fastest thing on two legs (Alan Cordice) with the biggest boot in the League (Dennis Byatt) proved a master-stroke and, together with the brief fairy-tale



interlude of Andy Graham's love-affair with the Stones faithful, the "Double-winning" side should have been the first step forward to even greater successes. However, the complacency of Chairman Morritt who declined to finance Brian Hall's requested squad replacements together with the indifference of the Harrow public who took little interest in having the country's leading side on their door-step led to half the side and its Manager departing for new challenges at Yeovil. The slump commenced and was hastened by an abysmal and then unfortunate choice of replacement management. The end result was gradual then rapid decline culminating in relegation in 87/88 from the Conference.

Off the pitch, however, the seeds of recovery were being sown. Vice-Chairman Alan Clifton rallied public support on the terraces and deposed David Morritt in scenes that would have graced an Aaron Spelling production. David Morritt's property empire had prompted an audacious bid to purchase Elton John's interest in Watford as a solution to securing a new home for the club and releasing the value in Wealdstone's Lower Mead freehold. But Morritt did not count upon the depth of feeling among the Wealdstone regulars who objected to ground-sharing and a move so far out of Harrow. Most were by this time highly dubious of his motives. Clifton did his homework and produced a damning and passionate case in favour of ousting Morritt. In the end it took High Court action and massive legal fees to get rid of



Main Stand at Wealdstone



The pitch and Elmslie End

Morritt and the two obstructive Trustees in whose name the freehold of Lower Mead was lodged.

To assist him Alan Clifton now needed a Board of Directors with a love of Wealdstone Football Club and not solely business interests in its veins. To the delight of the Stones followers who had been accustomed to faceless absentee Directors with little enthusiasm for anything other than commercial aspects of the game, Clifton summoned help from within the club itself. Club Secretary and stalwart Peter Braxton, Supporters Club Secretary Nick Dugard, Vice-Presidents Chairman Eric Fletcher and yours truly, Toby Jackson, were plucked from the terraces to form a Board of truly democratic constitution.

The next battle was to mastermind the club's relocation. The club was losing £60,000 to £80,000 a year and though Alan Clifton had funded total debts of around £1 million, local support regardless of how successful the side was could not finance an economic recovery. Only by selling Lower Mead could the value in the club's main asset be released and used to ensure future prosperity. The local council sadly showed little interest in re-housing the club though there was no shortage of buyers waiting to pounce on the prime site the club were to be forced to vacate. After various alternative sites were researched and found unsuitable as a new home, Wealdstone were finally offered a life-line by neighbouring Brent Council who were keen to pay host to a club of Wealdstone's reputation and potential.

Willesden Stadium, coincidentally almost sounding ready named for the Stones, is some 20 minutes drive from Harrow.



Masterminding the away trips and sales of Wealdstone souvenirs.



Toby with some of his badges on offer in the Wealdstone Club Shop.

An initial two year agreement was formulated to move to Willesden from the start of the 1990/91 season whilst the search for a Harrow venue continues. An artificial pitch is laid at Willesden, the stadium housing athletics, American Football and even international hockey. The stadium is in fine fettle and will only need a few basic improvements as regards facilities to prepare for Beazer Homes or hopefully Conference football.

The Wealdstone side finished half-way up (if you're an optimist) or down (for the pessimist) the Premier Division in 88/89. Manager Tony Jennings secured the England Non-League Manager's post during the season as a tribute to the esteem in which he is held in the Non-League game, but in many respects he is still developing his Management style and tactical preferences. Money was not an available commodity during his term in charge at Dagenham, so Alan Clifton's conviction to back his Manager financially gave Tony Jennings new scope with which to emulate his success as an Enfield and England Non-League star.

To improve on last season's mid-table position, £10,000 has been paid to secure the services up front of Hayes' Tony Kelly, ironically a former Stone released several years ago as a teenager by Manager Allen Batsford. 25 year old Kelly notched 27 goals for Hayes last season despite missing six weeks. £7000 was spent to bring full-back Steve Tapley back to Lower Mead from Yeovil, and £9000 on full-back Sean

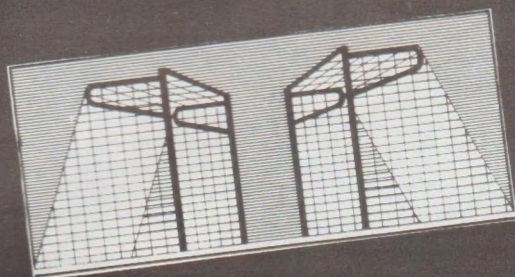
Continued on page 37



'Stones Chairman Alan Clifton (left) greet fellow Director Eric Fletcher in the Wealdstone Boardroom.



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NON-LEAGUE **CLUB FOCUS**



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EASTBOURNE TOWN

C L U B S H O P



R E V I E W



No.2



● With Bri (The Shop Spy)

BUCKINGHAM TOWN

This wooden shed-style construction, as can be seen from the photo above, is actually donated by the firm who manufactured it, as their name is plastered all across the front of the shop. Situated just to the left of the main entrance as you come into the ground in the corner, it is quite spacious although on my visit it all looked a little bare with a lack of items actually on display. The shop is very good for Buckingham Town programmes (current season) plus those from past seasons, although there are not that many other clubs programmes. The shop staff are quite friendly and prices reasonable. They sell a few other Town souvenirs as well such as badges, scarves, etc. Personally, I don't think it is fulfilling its potential because there is room for improvement, and if things were better laid out and there was an improved selection on offer, it would get very good ratings.

RATING OUT OF 10 5

CORINTHIAN CASUALS

Not strictly speaking a "shop" although it must be said that the selection of new and old programmes available in the Clubhouse on tables is as good as those found in many proper shops. For groundhoppers who have yet to visit Casuals' new Tolworth ground, the Clubhouse (just by the entrance) is the place for browsing through boxes and boxes of non-league and league programmes. All programmes are alphabetically displayed, and there are some very reasonably priced gems to be had. The elderly gentleman who sits there to take your money can help you find

something you are looking for if you ask, and although there are many run-of-the-mill issues from the like of Barnet, Dagenham, etc, there was also a box of pre-league Wimbledon programmes including many rare ones, all reasonably priced. It is nice to see a club from a smaller league taking the trouble to provide spectators with something on these lines, so they should be congratulated.

RATING OUT OF 10 6

TAMWORTH

This club won the FA Vase last season in a thrilling final replay against Sudbury Town and the shop which is situated in the far corner of the ground, will no doubt have done brisk trade these last few months. The two gentlemen serving are very knowledgeable and although they mainly cater for souvenirs there are some programmes for sale from other clubs as well as back issues of Tamworth programmes. They also sell match programmes from that day there too. Other items currently available from the shop include mugs, cushions, tea-towels, etc, as well as their souvenir FA Vase brochure. Overall, a reasonable shop although a bit on the small side making it difficult to display items.

RATING OUT OF 10 5



Groundhopper Magazine General Guidance Notes

1. The main aim of the Groundhopper Magazine and the jointly run Groundhoppers Club is to promote Non-League football and to give it's subscribers and club members the opportunity of contributing in the form of articles, letters and photographs, etc.
2. Membership of the Groundhoppers Club is FREE. To join, write to Steve Pettit (Membership Secretary) at the address on the inside front cover, enclosing full details such as your name, address, groundhopping interests, etc. Also, please enclose a s.a.e. for the return of your membership card.
3. Once you become a member you are entitled to certain privileges as outlined in the club literature detailed elsewhere.
4. As a club it will be financed in association with Groundhopper Magazine, and all members will receive an annual statement of accounts at the A.G.M. on a date to be arranged, probably on the day of a convention at a non-league venue to be decided. Full details will appear in the magazine.
5. There will be conventions, organised trips to grounds and fundraising events throughout the year, jointly arranged by the Groundhopper Magazine and Groundhoppers Club.
6. Groundhopper Magazine is published EVERY month throughout the year, with current subscription rates shown on the inside front cover. Contained in each issue are full details of all Club events such as news of conventions, etc.
7. If sending photographs for inclusion in the magazine, please note that there may be a delay in returning them if more than six are sent at once. The process for preparing them for publication is expensive, and we can therefore only use photos for one issue at a time. Please ALWAYS indicate when sending photos whether you would like them returned or whether we can retain them.
8. The magazine is usually despatched on the 15th of each month, subject to copy deadlines being met with our printers. You should receive your magazine about two weeks prior to cover date. (ie; January issue received 16th or 17th December).
9. We cannot be held responsible for material being lost in the post when being returned to originator after use (such as photos, etc.)
10. The magazine is available on SUBSCRIPTION ONLY. When you are coming to the end of your subscription we will send you a letter reminding you that it is time to renew, and will enclose a new subscription form.
11. A joint Groundhoppers Club and Magazine Committee has been formed, with the purpose of helping to organise events, help with fundraising, etc. If YOU would like to join please write to Steve King for full details.
12. A limited number of back issues of Groundhopper Magazine are available from Ron Jones, 24 Poplar Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 3JR. For current availability please check elsewhere in this month's issue.
13. For copy dates for this year's issues, please see elsewhere for full details, which also includes despatch dates for the magazine.
14. Please give the magazine maximum publicity whenever possible, and support us at the Annual General Meeting and at conventions and all organised events.

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Action from the Anglian Combination as Horsford United have to make do with a 1-1 home draw with Aylsham Wanderers. *Photo: LEO HOENIG*



A Mountnessing shot sails inches over the bar during their match on 22.4.89, losing 0-1 at Runwell Hospital. Att: 30. *Photo: A MIDDLETON*



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